



3の
素晴らしい
世界に
祝福
を!

暁
なつめ

三嶋くろね
Illustration

億千万の
花嫁

Kono Subarashii Sekai ni Shukufuku o!

- Volume 7 -
110 Millions Brides

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この素晴らしい世界に
祝福を!

花嫁
億万の





今回こそは『竜殺し』の
二つ名を頂きです!!

めぐみん

帰させて!
ねえお願い帰させて!
何だか嫌な予感が
するの!

カズマ

力、カズマつ、放せ！手を放せ！

うつせー大バカ女が!! お前俺の女房気取りか!
俺の事が好きならそう言えっていつてんだろ!

この大バカがつ!
誰がそんな事を言つた!

この素晴らしい世界に祝福を！



花嫁 億千万の

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口絵・本文イラスト／三嶋くろね
口絵・本文デザイン／
百足屋ユウコ+ナカムラナナフシ
(ムシカゴグラフィクス)

PROLOGUE

“You little! Why are you always like this!?”

“That’s what I should be saying! Just what makes you so unhappy that you keep lecturing me! Is that your plan!? You want me to notice you? Tsundere? If you like me, just say it straight!”

After hearing me say that as I laid on the couch, Darkness’ eyebrow rose even higher.

“Who would like a weak virgin hikkikomori like you! Always spouting nonsense fighting words! I will teach you a lesson!”

“S-stop it! I am carefully polishing the precious ring Iris left with me! How will you pay me back if it goes missing in the struggle, didn’t you say this thing is important!?”

As Darkness grabbed my collar, I shoved the ring in her face to resist.

“I am angry because it is important! Don’t wipe the national treasure Princess Iris keeps on her at all times with your dirty handkerchief!”

“H-how mean, even I will feel hurt after hearing that!! This might be a cheap handkerchief, but I am taking care of this ring filled with Iris’ feelings in my own way.”

“I’m not talking about the price of the handkerchief, didn’t you use it to wipe your snot all the time!? Buy a new polishing cloth!!”

Darkness who was shouting finally let me go, and sunk into the couch with a tired expression.

“Really, being with you is so tiring. I finally returned to this town, but I didn’t rest at all.”

“That’s my line. You always stir up trouble, but lecture me with a serious face from time to time. You barely reached the bottom of aristocracy, but you are still a noble lady right? Showing an air of a fine lady wouldn’t be bad for you.”

“B-bottom of the aristocracy!? You call House Dustiness known as the favored sword of the Kingdom, the bottom of the aristocracy...! ... You are probably the only one in the world who would say that I am still a noble lady at the bottom of the aristocracy.”

“Hey, if you want to compliment me, make it easier to understand.”

“I am not complimenting you.”

Darkness leaned back on the couch and sip the tea that was placed on the side table.

“... Speaking of which, you are always like this. When I revealed my family background, you were more interested in my name than my social status, what a weird guy.”

“What’s with you, Lalatina? I don’t want to be called weird by a person like you. An unworldly noble lady, an adventurer and a ‘M’. Just how many character traits do you want to hog, you greedy woman.”

Darkness put the tea she was drinking back onto the table.

“... Seems like I will have to settle things with you one day.”

“Alright alright, let’s have a match one day, young lady.”

I brushed off the vexed Darkness nonchalantly and drank some tea too.

“Hmm, this taste good. You are useless, but the tea you make is good.”

Darkness’ mood turned better when she heard me.

“Fufu, you said the dishes I cooked are average, but I am confident in my tea. The key to brewing delicious key is to warm the cup first, and to pour it in until the very last drop. If you apologize for your crude remarks earlier, I wouldn’t mind brewing another for you.”

“I get it, I get it, sorry for teasing you. It’s not much of an apology, but if you fell out of grace with nobility, I will hire you as a maid.”

“Falling out of grace is impossible! ... Really, you are a strange man. I thought you are a weakling, but you act courageously sometimes. You will help others, but you will go play around at night, doing disagreeable things. Which one is the real you?”

“What do you mean by real. Everyone will do good things when their mood are good, and urinate in public when they felt pissed off. I am just a normal person. Sorry for not being a rigid hero.”

“No, that’s fine. Or rather, instead of princes and heroes, I prefer an ordinary guy... For example, someone like you.”

“Hey, what do you mean? What was that? First Megumin, now you too, why must the two of you tell me such vague things? Say it properly so a virgin like me can understand.”

Darkness smiled after listening to what I said.

“Make a guess.”

She said and started drinking tea in a good mood.

CHAPTER 1

GIFTING THIS UPSTART ADVENTURER WITH PEACE!

Part 1

— We received a summoning notice from the adventurers guild some time after returning to Axel.

“Well then, adventurer Satou Kazuma-san. The content of the summons today...”

At the adventurers guild counter, the staff onee-san smiled cheerfully at me with a heavy bag in her hands.

“The payout for the reward is delayed as the amount was very high... This is the bounty for the demon king army boss Sylvia, three hundred million Eris! This is the fourth demon king army boss subjugated by Kazuma-san! Kazuma-san, you are the ace adventurer of the Axel adventurers guild! ... Here, please accept this!”

“Ohhh!” x6

The adventurers watching us burst out into cheers.

I smiled calmly at the crowd as I reached for the heavy bag.

“Hey, take it easy everyone. This is not the first time I took out a huge bounty target right? Really, just a mere three hundred million Eris is... Hmm? Onee-san, you can let go now. I am holding the bag steadily and it won’t drop. Really, hey...! Hey, let go! Hey, let it go!!” I struggled with the staff who was unwilling to give me the bag.

“But Kazuma’s team already defeated four Demon King Army bosses. I was worried that they might get wiped out some day, but they really made it big now.”

“That’s right. They were a team that can’t even take down frogs not too long ago, but that Kazuma-kun is one of the few wealthy and successful guys in town. Truth is stranger than fiction huh.”

Voices came from all corners of the guild.

“No, I always felt that Kazuma was a guy who would make it big when the time was right.”

“I thought you were going about a bet on when Kazuma’s team would get wiped out? ...But they are just amazing. Kazuma has the weakest job adventurer. He doesn’t have outstanding equipment, but he still managed to fight on par with the bosses of the Demon King Army, that’s the incredible part.”

After finally wrestling the bounty over and hugging it carefully in my arms, I turned my face towards those guys who were still yapping.

And then...

“Really. Hey, you won’t get anything from praising me like that okay? ... At most, I will just treat you to the best wine in the house ahhh!”

When they heard my cocky words, everyone in the guild cheered.

“Ohhhhh,, Kazuma is so handsome ahhh!”

“Hyaaa—! Kazuma is the boss! Marry me and feed me for life!!”

“The number one upstart adventurer in Axel!”

“As expected of Kazuma who only has great luck!”

“Hahaha, even if you flatter me... Hey, who is the one who said I only have luck, I have many strong points aside from luck!”

It has almost been a year since I came to this place.

I finally welcomed such a moment.

That’s right, the coming of my era.

“— Really! How could you, Kazuma!! We were worried about you since you didn’t come back after so long, and I find you having a party here without us! And I even

came here to check on you!" In the guild that was rowdier than usual, Aqua who was seated opposite me complained.

"I am partly at fault for not returning after so long, but you are the one who asked me to come alone, saying that nothing good could come from the guild summoning our entire team. Oh, here it is, the ice cold beer I ordered. For you."

I placed the beer I ordered for myself before the pouting Aqua.

"Really, if you think my mood will turn better just by giving some beer, you are dead wrong alright? Megumin was pacing around the house and mumbling 'He is still not back yet...' every five minutes. Darkness was muttering 'Is it because of that? Princess noticed the real identity of the benevolent thief after all? Ahh, what should I do to...' and something like that with her head in her arms! ... Hahh—! Hey, give me another beer!"

Aqua who was venting her frustration by rapping the table downed the cold beer in one go and asked for a refill.

Megumin who was taking small sips besides me said— "I'm relieved that the summon is for a good news, which is rare. Because Aqua wanted to bet on whether it is good news or bad news. She even said 'I bet Kazuma committed a serious crime and has been arrested, three thousand Eris.'"

Hey.

"She also said that we should pack our luggage and be prepared to run if Kazuma really got into deep trouble. The bags by Aqua's feet are the evidence." After hearing that from Darkness, I checked for the bags by her feet and picked on Aqua:

"What the hell are you so worried about, are you kidding me!? What is with that bag!? Hey, give me that refill!"

"Don't wanna, order another if you want one! And it's true that I was worried about Kazuma! You see, wouldn't it be terrible if Kazuma isn't with us!? For example...! Like.... Like...? Hey Darkness, how would we be troubled if this guy is not with us?"

"Stop your nonsense, how many times did you think I cleaned up after you all!? I will give you a good whooping, get over here!"

"Ah, where are you pulling! The divine relic is getting stretched out, stop! Staph!!!"
Aqua slapped at my hand that was grabbing her hagoromo.

"Really. Why is Princess Iris so concerned about this noisy and uncouth man... Hmm, personally, I think it is because he is a rare sight and she did so on a whim..."

Besides Aqua, Darkness was enjoying the fragrance of the wine in her wine glass as she murmured to herself.

A lot of things happened in the capital.

Like routing the Demon King Army that attacked alongside other adventurers.

Protecting the property of a noble from a thief that disrupted the peace of the capital.

Resolving a national crisis in the dark without letting anyone know about it.

And more importantly, Iris became my cute sister...

"I wonder how Iris is doing. I am worried about her crying alone at night because of loneliness... Right, I should ask Vanir to make a doll that looks just like me. That guy did say the Vanir doll that laughs in the middle of the night is a top seller. Let's get him to make a Kazuma doll that will laugh in the middle of the night for Iris. That way, she won't feel lonely at night anymore."

"Hey Kazuma, don't ever send such a creepy thing over! I can post letters for you, but not that thing! They will think you are a terrorist!?"

Part 2

Another week passed after receiving the bounty from the guild.

After going on plenty of trips recently, we finally enjoyed some peace in Axel town.

“— Hey, who is the one who made this dish!? Tell the head chef that the talk of the town, adventurer Satou Kazuma who subjugated many bounty targets is asking for him!”

“Tell him that the arch priest Aqua is here too!”

After striking it rich overnight, Aqua and I had been visiting the restaurants in Axel town in search of delicious food.

The one who was probably the main chef came to the corner of the shop that was hogged by us.

“M-may I asked if you have any feedback, does something displeases you?”

The chef who was summoned out of the blue observed our expression timidly.

“No, I just wish to thank you and offer my compliments for the delicious meal. After enjoying the dishes in the capital, not many chef can impress my tongue of god.”

“T-thank you for your compliment.”

As the troubled head chef lowered his head in thanks, Aqua wiped the corner of her mouth with a napkin and added:

“You used grape wine in this stew right? The bitterness is that of a red wine. The brand is... That’s right, a thirty years old Romanee-Continue... Am I wrong?”

“It is vinegar on sales that was just purchased.”

“... Is that so. To bring out such a taste with cheap vinegar, that is amazing.”

“I am truly thankful for your compliment.”

Once he learned that we wouldn't pose a danger to him, the head chef regained his composure and bowed to Aqua.

In response to the polite head chef, I showed him the half eaten meat on my fork.

"The stew is delicious, but my favourite would be this. This meat is really soft. That's right, if I have to use an analogy... This is like sneaking into the room of the girl you like, and when you opened her cabinet with a pounding heart, it turned out to be a mimic treasure chest monster. That intense, unexpected impact... So, do you get what I mean?"

"Absolutely not."

"Is that so. Anyway, it is superbly delicious. I, adventurer Satou Kazuma, gives this restaurant three stars."

"I will give this restaurant three stars too."

"Thank you. I will work hard to achieve four stars next time."

I handed several Eris notes to the chef who was smiling cheerfully.

"Haha, you have a way with words! The meal is splendid, I will come again... As thanks for the delicious dishes, please keep the change. Thank you for the meal."

"Thank you for the meal!"

"Although you paid the exact amount, I will look forward to your next visit. Thank you for your patronage."

The chef was courteous to the very end and watched Aqua and me politely until we exited the restaurant.

— After getting the bounty from defeating Sylvia, we lived a lavish life.

The four of us divided the three hundred million Eris from subjugating Sylvia equally. And for me, I will be getting a large sum of money from the business deal with Vanir on top of that.

With that much money, I could live the rest of my life without working even if I splurge a little.

I made it to the winner group in life.

After all the hardships I endured, I finally made it into the ranks of winners among the adventurers.

Aqua and I patted our full stomach as we returned to the mansion that befits our status as first class adventurers.

While discussing which restaurant to visit for dinner, we opened the door...

“I’m home...”

“Really, what a perverted crusader! Here, you want this huh? Don’t endure it anymore, just give up...! ...Ah.”

“I won’t submit for something like that! With my honour as a crusader on the line, I can take it even if it is for an hour or two... Ah.”

Darkness was rolled up with thick blankets and rolled to the entrance.

Megumin was squatting before Darkness and waving an ice cube in front of her.

Both of their cheeks were flushed, and Darkness was even panting.



After meeting their eyes, I closed the door softly.

Megumin then opened the door with a bang and dashed out.

“Don’t close the door! Don’t misunderstand, it’s not what you think!”

“No no, it’s fine, I get it. Aqua and I will come back after dinner, please carry on. If you want, we can spend the night outside.”

“The Axis cult accepts love between the same sex. Do you need a blessing spell?”

“You misunderstood completely! This is, that, Darkness she...”

Megumin grabbed Aqua and my hand, working hard to stop us from leaving.

“Ugh, to think there will be an additional Shame Play...! Even if Kazuma and Aqua see my shameful appearance, I still won’t give in!”

“You are making things more complicated, so shut up Darkness!”

After Darkness who was squirming around in the blankets became quiet, I noticed that hot air was coming out from the opened door.

It was almost summer, but these two had lit the fireplace.

“This is not any special Play, Darkness is just asking me to help her train for the Endurance competition. She seemed to be the winner in the annual summer Endurance competition in this town.”

Megumin whose face was all red pressed the ice cube onto the forehead of Darkness whose face was equally flushed.

“I feel both down and relief at the same time... But if you want to train, do it in Darkness’ house. You are making the living room all hot and stuffy.”

Darkness exhaled blissfully when Megumin pressed the ice onto her head and said:

“Actually, my father is not feeling well recently. If he sees me doing this, she will be worried about what his daughter who have yet to marry is doing. I have to be considerate about his feelings...”

“Is your father unwell because you turned on the heater at home?”

Her strange mood probably subsided because of the ice applied onto her—

“Phew... Kazuma and the others are back, so let’s call it a day. Thanks to Megumin, I realized that raising my adventurers level will also improve my resistance to heat. I will definitely win again this year. Hey Kazuma, help me to untie this.”

She said as she wriggled in the blankets.

.....

“Your appearance right now looks really similar to how I was when I was hit by a bind magic in Alderp’s villa.”

“...? Is that so? Maybe that really is. Eh, let’s talk about this later. Untie me first. The blanket is soaked in my sweat, I want to take a bath now.”

After hearing what I said, Aqua and Megumin bent down towards Darkness who was squirming around.

The two of them noticed my intentions and were smiling deviously.

Darkness looked up at us a little uneasily.

I repeatedly opened and closed my fingers and said:

“We have been together for quite long, you should understand my character by now. That’s right, I am a man who will pay whatever is done to me ten times back... Hey, Darkness-san who toyed with me for a long time when I was immobile in the capital! Today, you look really interesting ahhh!”

“Ugh! Just kill me!”

Darkness who started struggling with a blushed face said something crusader like for the first time.

“— Sigh. My steaming, immobile body is going to be toyed by Kazuma...”

“Hey, watch your words. It sounds really lewd when you put it that way.”

After everyone gave Darkness a good tickling.

Darkness might complain verbally, but her body was glowing with satisfaction.

"I plan to train tomorrow too. So Kazuma, want to play the role of the one flaunting the ice before me while I endure the heat?"

"Don't wanna... I already said no, don't look at me with such expectant eyes."

After I chased Darkness who was wearing an expression of pity to the showers, I looked at Aqua who sat barefooted on the couch cross legged.

"Really, where did the awe inspiring Darkness in the capital go? Last night, I went to the public cemetery to purify lost souls alright? Everyone should learn from me who contributes to society every day."

She said that despite forgetting about her promise with Wiz to purify the cemetery periodically, and only rushed over when she heard about the increase number of mischiefs by the spirits recently.

... No, let's leave that aside for now.

Instead of that, I was concerned about something else since earlier.

"... What is that thing you are cradling near your stomach?"

A piece of towel was laid out on Aqua's lap, with a small egg on top.

When we went out just now, she was fidgeting with something inside her pocket too.

"Ara ara, you noticed so soon, Kazuma? Alright, let me tell you. Don't be surprised okay, this is a dragon egg."

"Dragon!?" x2

Megumin and I blurt out in surprise at the same time, while Aqua said with an arrogant face.

"When I was house sitting alone some time ago, a merchant who heard about exploits visited okay? He said 'it is an honour to meet you! I have been searching for powerful

adventurers who can fight on par with the demon king army! Allow me to present you with my precious collection, just for your team that fight tirelessly without regard for your safety against the demon king army!' He also mentioned that we will need a familiar like a dragon to prepare for our fight against the demon king army in the future. I think that is a good point."

Heard about our exploits?

What the... this felt suspicious.

Maybe he heard we earned a huge sum of money?

Aqua didn't notice the awkward look on my face and started telling about that dubious dragon egg.

"Listen well alright? I will tell you since Kazuma is an idiot without common sense, the dragon egg is difficult to obtain. Even when it appears on the market, some nobles or rich people would buy it immediately. Since someone is willing to sell it to us, we have to buy buy buy right? This is a dragon you know? Aren't you excited?"

... To be honest, if I say I'm not excited, but the more I hear about it, the more suspicious I get.

"... How much did you pay for that egg?"

Aqua said happily when she heard my question.

"Oh, he actually told me that it would be fine to exchange all the money I have for it! Dragon egg won't be cheaper than a hundred million, so I asked him why is it so cheap? He said that he don't want the dragon to be a symbol of wealth, but to contribute to the fight against the demon king!"

I felt an onsetting headache as I stood before Aqua who was cradling the egg carefully with both hands.

"... And so, you bought it."

"I bought it. I already decided on the name. He is Glinsfold Zell Emperor. Since I will be raising it, it will be the emperor and kings among dragons. You can address this child as Emperor Zell."

Aqua said as she covered the egg in her palms, showering it in gentle light.

I wasn't sure if she was maintaining the temperature with magic or using her goddess powers to promote its growth?

But no matter how I look at it, this was an egg.

In conclusion, I won't take part in any quest before the egg hatches. Hey Kazuma, I can't take my hands away now, bring my dinner over and feed me."

Alright, let's have fried eggs for dinner.

Part 3

“— I will be back in no time... Sorry for making you do this stuff, Megumin.”

“It’s fine. Aqua refuses to go out if I don’t do this. And it’s true that only Aqua can fight on par with that devil.”

The next day.

With Aqua and Darkness in tow, I headed for Wiz’s shop.

Megumin will watch the house.

Despite the hot weather, she lit the fireplace and sat before it to incubate the egg that was bought by Aqua.

Aside from the temperature, there was also the need to rotate the angle, so it was troublesome in all sorts of ways.

This was the compromise made for Aqua who didn’t want to go because she wanted to incubate the egg.

Together with Aqua and Darkness, I came to a humble shop far from the main streets of the town.

“Open the door! Open the door!! I say open up, it is already morning! Your biggest clients are here! Quick, open up, open up!”

Aqua had gotten used to visiting Wiz’s shop, and was banging on the door early in the morning.

As Aqua was yelling, heavy footsteps came from inside and the door was thrown open.

“Don’t make so much noise early in the morning, think about the neighbours thee public nuisance woman! There is still some time before the shop opens, come back after thou wash thy face!” The one who charged out was a clerk in a weird mask.

The arch devil Vanir roared when he saw us.

"We are here as a guest today, but have some other business! You will be busy when the shop opens right? You should be grateful to us for coming early for your sake. Quick, give me your thanks."

Aqua who was facing Vanir head on sneered.



The shop was more prosperous than ever, thanks to the new product I developed.

Since the deal I made was from selling my intellectual property rights, no matter how well the merchandize was selling, I won't make a single cent more.

That might be so, but as the inventor, I will feel happy seeing the merchandize sell well.

"Hearing that thou who can't read the mood being considerate for moi is nerve wrecking. It makes one wonders what thou is scheming... Never mind, moi knows why thou art here. It's for the payout of that upstart brat over there. Come in and wait, moi will bring it here shortly."

Aqua continued to pester Vanir who entered the shop.

"Say your thanks to me! Say 'I am very grateful that you made time for a useless devil like me'!!"

"Moi already said thou art noisy! The shop owner who stayed up working for consecutive nights is sleeping, so be quiet! If thee tarnish the reputation of moi shop by being rowdy, moi will curse thee with aloe growing from thy butt!"

"Just try it if you can! You think a curse from a small fry devil like you will work on me? Are you dumb? You said the mask is your true body, then where is your brain?"

"Hahahaha! Hahaha! As expected, Moi have to settle things with thee. Alright, let's take it outside!"

"Don't bicker every time you meet! And what is the Wiz working consecutive nights about, is business that good?"

I separated the two who was pulling at each other and asked Vanir.

"Yes, this is what it means by laughing all the way to the bank. Since production is equal to sales, moi made the shop owner work in the counter during the day and manufacture the goods at night for about two weeks without eating or sleeping. Recently, she started crying and laughing for no reason and was emotionally unstable. Since she can't attend to customers, moi allowed her to rest."

"H-hey, you..."

In response to the dumbstruck me, Vanir came back with a bag full of money in one hand.

"Moi had an epiphany. A way for the shop owner who will mess up and run into debt if moi leave her alone. After observing her recently, moi realized that woman will do something unnecessary if she is idle. And so, moi tried making her work 24 hours without even time to eat, and it was very effective."

Vanir told me something chilling as he handed the bag to me.

Even an undead Lich deserved a break.

I don't know who is the owner and who is the employee anymore.

"Speaking of which..."

At this moment, Vanir turned and face Darkness.

"Hey, the one who is free all this while. The lust is accumulating in thy mature body over time, even though thou art a virgin, but every night—"

"What are you saying ahhhh!!"

Darkness charged at him with a roar.

Vanir dodged nimbly.

"... Hmm, the top notch negative emotion of shame, delicious... Armour girl, thou have the 'sign of destruction' on thee. It's probably because of the brilliance from the annoying glowing woman besides, moi couldn't see thy future clearly. In order to repay thy help in formalizing this huge deal, moi will tell thy fortune."

He had a sinister smile that befits a devil when he said that.

"Hey, is that glowing woman referring to me?"

Aqua kept tugging on Vanir's shirt.

"... Sign of destruction?"

Darkness asked with a nervous expression, and I...

"Instead of that, tell me what you were about to say regarding what Darkness is doing every night!"

Darkness whose ears were red to the roots pounced on me with tears in her eyes.

Part 4

I think my front teeth are loose.

"Well then, let moi take a look. Little girl who have a strange sense of obligation from being a noble, but don't have the capability and only waste her time. Here, this way."

"..."

Darkness sat opposite Vanir reluctantly.

I nursed my face that was punched hard by the teary Darkness and watched them.

Aqua refused to heal me, saying that I deserved it, so I had to use freeze to ease the swelling.

I will ask Vanir for the details later.

"Hey Darkness, don't take the divination of a devil wholeheartedly. Instead of that suspicious thing, the advice from the elegant me will definitely be more beneficial."

Not really.

"Hmmp. Moi divination isn't something vague that could be explained in all sorts of ways like the will of the gods. As the devil who can see through everything, moi divination won't lose to a professional diviner... Alright, moi will ask thee some questions for now. There might be some questions that is difficult to answer, but thou have to answer truthfully."

"I-I understand... but why is an Eris devotee and crusader like me getting my fortune told by a devil..."

"It's free, so there is no harm listening. You just need to answer a few questions right?"

When she heard what I said, Darkness muttered that what I said was true, and faced Vanir.

"Hmm, so thou art ready. First, place one hand on this crystal ball... After that, thou just need to wait for a little while. So, please answer moi following questions honestly."

"Ugh... I-I got it..."

Darkness placed her hand on the crystal ball as instructed by Vanir.

アクア

ねえ発光女ってひよつとして私の事?

ダクネス

……破滅の相だと?

バニル

……鎧の娘よ、貴様には
常に鬱陶しくも眩しい
発光女がうろちょろ
しているせいか、
未来を見通し辛い。
今回大きな儲け話を
持ってきてくれた礼に、
我輩の力でじっくりと
占つてやろう

"Well then. Pray tell, why did thou, a crusader who values defensive power and require weight to stand firm and resist attack, start reducing the weight of thy armour?"

When she heard what Vanir said, Darkness quivered violently.

"... T-that is... B-because I am not agile, so I was thinking about reducing the weight of the armour so my attacks can land easier... I-I... think..."

In response to the stuttering Darkness.

"Moi already told thee to answer honestly."

Vanir said quietly.

.....

"... I am bothered by my abs becoming more and more defined, so I... reduced the armour's weight..."

Darkness lowered her head embarrassedly, and said as quietly as a fly.

... It became defined huh?

..... She seemed really bothered by that.

Vanir nodded satisfactory after hearing her answer.

"True, true... Pray tell. Why did thou pose in the mirror with thy mage companions one piece dress from the laundry basket, and muttered a little happily 'Ah, this won't do, it doesn't suit me...' Also, pray tell why thou were smiling so brilliantly with thy head tilted unlike your usual solemn face despite saying thou did not suit the dress. And pray tell why did thou check the surrounding with a blushed face and place the dress back in the laundry basket."

The devil-sama who could see through everything was absolutely the strongest.

Just how much do you know, Vanir-sama.

"... B-because, because cute dresses don't suit me, so it is embarrassing to buy them or ask someone to buy them for me, that's why I have never touched them before... I saw it by chance and tried it on a whim... I-I am sorry that an uncute muscle woman like me posed with it... Sorry..."

Darkness covered her flushed face with both hands and apologized in a trembling voice.

I don't think she needed to apologize so seriously just for posing with Megumin's clothes, but Darkness was really embarrassed, her mental resistance was almost zero.

"I think Darkness will look good in a cute one piece dress! After all, you are always wearing the cool type or mature type of dresses! You also wore an aristocratic lady style of dress before, so trying a cute one piece is nothing much! There is nothing wrong with Darkness trying out a cute dress in secret!"

Aqua who didn't mean any harm clenched her fists as she encouraged Darkness.

It was another blow for Darkness, who laid onto the table with her face in her arm, her ears completely red.

Vanir looked at Darkness and nodded with a pleased look.

After that...

"Alright, the last question. Thou knew that the man who under the same roof as thee will look at you with lewd eyes, but pray tell why you wandered around the mansion in an attire that accentuates the curves of your body—"

"What! What does this have to do with the divination!?"

Darkness stood up with a face that was on the verge of tears.

Vanir was puzzled and tilted his head.

"Moi didn't say the divination couldn't be done without asking questions. Moi merely asked you out of curiosity. The divination only require thee to place thy hand on the crystal ball. Moi was just killing time with moi questions while waiting for the divination results... Hey, hey stop! Why art thou touching moi mask as thee please!? Don't attempt to unmask moi in tears!"

— She was probably unhappy about being played with, even though Darkness had her hand on the crystal ball, she refused to look at Vanir. Vanir stared at the crystal ball and told her:

“... Hoho, I see. Yes, the sign of destruction. Thy family and father will meet with misfortune in the future. And then, thou who is stupid will think everything could be solved by sacrificing thyself, and take reckless actions. No one would be happy about that. Thy father will live in frustration and regret for the rest of his life. A good way to avoid it would be to...”

After hearing Vanir’s words, Darkness had a very serious expression.

“... Ho, in conclusion, thou couldn’t do anything with thy strength. It would be better to abandon everything and go. In a faraway place thou can start over with that man who is thinking ‘If I am a bit more forceful, I should be able to do it with Darkness right?’, but is too scared of crossing the line and compromising the current relationship.”

“Hey, wait right there, really now. Every time you open your mouth, my teammates trust towards me turns negative.”

Darkness stood up silently.

I shivered, but she didn’t seem to be angry.

That was expected, I just thought forcing myself on her might work, but had not done anything yet.

“... Vanir, thank you for your divination. No matter what happens, I won’t run away... Well, I will believe half of what you said. Kazuma, you won’t be going out for missions any time soon after getting so much money right? I am not bothered by the divination, but I am planning to return home to visit my father after being away for so long.”

Darkness said as she exited the shop.

Part 5

“Hey, useless devil, can’t you be more specific? And you were just saying that the signs from the gods are too vague. Tell my fortune too. Anyway, try divining what sort of dragon Emperor Zell would be. And does he have the power to rule over the dragons. Ah, also—I ran out of money after buying Emperor Zell, so teach me a way to earn money easily. You can see through everything right?”

After Darkness left the shop, Aqua said something like that.

Vanir’s mouth twisted with disgust coming from the bottom of his heart.

“This is moi first time seeing such an uncouth goddess. If moi have an easy way to make money, moi would have told the debt ridden shop owner, and save up the funds to build my dungeon. Moi ability is to see what someone has done and what will happen to that person in the future. Nothing good will come of using this skill on thy greed... Thee don’t even understand this, are you really a goddess?”

Aqua sneered at Vanir.

“In the end, you are just a devil, you over advertised yourself. Hah— How useless. Let’s go back, Kazuma. I will continue incubating Emperor Zell. After that child hatches, I will turn this devil into that child’s feed.”

“... Ohh, moi sensed a revelation. Thou can rename Emperor Zell to Teriyaki. It will be loved by everyone during dinner tonight.”

Vanir and Aqua stood up with cold smiles on their face.

“Ara ara, what is with that name. The one hatching from the egg is a dragon alright? I spent loads of money to buy it. Why should I give it a name that sound so delicious?”

“I bet moi name as the devil Vanir who can see through everything. The thing that will hatch from the egg favoured by the cockeyed goddess will be delicious chicken meat...”

I decided to ignore the two of them who were staring at each other and stood up with the money held carefully in my hand.

In order to not lose it to thieves or carelessness, I decide to bank it in.

I was in a great mood after getting a huge sum of money, ignored the two who were staring at each other, and left...

"Wait, the brat who wants to make a booking at that shop and spend the night outside after getting a large amount of money."

I stopped in my tracks.

Please don't see through the part about my booking tonight.

"Do thou remember what moi said to thee the first time we met in this shop?"

"... What you said? What about it?"

How would I know if he ask me something from so long ago.

"To forget such an important advice, thou's memory is as bad as a goddess... Never mind, moi will give you new advice. Thou should not rest on thy laurels and develop more merchandize. Thou think thou wouldn't be troubled by money anymore? I said to the crusader girl just now that she couldn't do anything with her strength... However, depending on the effort thou put in, it might not be hopeless."

"I will give you a piece of advice too. All the money you worked so hard to earn will all be squandered by Wiz recklessly in just a matter of days... How is it? How is it? This is the future the Aqua who can see through everything divined for you."

"....." x2

— With the sound of bottles breaking, explosions and the voices of these two arguing behind my back, I set off on the trip back home.

I thought about the words Vanir told me as I was leaving the shop.

According to Vanir, Darkness' father and her House would meet with misfortune.

Darkness would sacrifice herself with a stupid way of solving the problem.

Whether these problems could be resolved would be dependent on my efforts.

He told me to invent products that would sell like hot cakes to prepare for this.

... What did he mean?

Part 6

One day, when I had almost forgotten about Vanir's divination.

Without any premonition like knockings, the door to the mansion opened suddenly.

A man wearing the attire of a butler entered the mansion without permission, wearing a solemn expression on his face.

"My apologies for intruding during a meal at such an hour. I am here for Lady Dustiness because of a very pressing matter... Pardon me, could I take some of your time?"

After the man finished without even introducing himself, he stared at us coldly while we were having our dinner.

Darkness who looked displeased said while holding a fork that had some vegetables on it.

"Since you are addressing me as Lady Dustiness, that means you are an envoy from some aristocratic House... I will humour you then. What is this about?"

When he heard annoyed reply, the man acknowledge softly.

"My master, Alexei Barnes Alderp, is seeking your presence. It is not convenient to talk in a place like this, so I have prepared for a carriage outside. We can discuss the details in my master's mansion. This way please."

The man arrogantly referred to our mansion as 'a place like this', and gestured outside without any sign of remorse.

In response to this man's attitude, the fork in Darkness' hand twisted with a creak.

I was worried that the short tempered young lady might say something scary and pounce on him, but Darkness simply place the twisted fork onto the table.

"... I will be going out for a bit. If I don't return after it has gotten late, lock the door... Well then, I'm off." She said and left with the man, before we could keep up with the sudden development.

“... What’s with that guy?”

“He mentioned Alderp. I remember that is the name of the old man landlord right? I am not certain, but did she get involved in something weird?”

I hope the situation won’t become weird... We turned quiet as a gloomy cloud covered our faces.

“If Darkness is going out, I will take the rest of her hamburg steak. Hey Megumin, can you feed me today? Kazuma is terrible at feeding. He even shoved a spoonful of stew into my nose yesterday.”

There was someone who couldn’t read the mood and refused to let go of her egg.

— The next morning.

“It’s almost summer and you still won’t shed. You are not like a cat at all... Hey, what do I need to do to return you to your original form? You are in that situation right? Your cat appearance is just a disguise correct? You are actually a beautiful cat eared girl who ends her sentence with ‘nyaa’, am I right?”

Sitting crossed legged besides the living room window and basking in the sun, I brushed the fur of Chomusuke as I talked to it.

I had been trying to talk to it from a long time ago, but I had yet to receive any reply. It showed response that seemed to imply it understood human speech, but it didn’t revert to its original form.

I was certain this was no ordinary cat.

Going by the development in mangas, it would definitely transform into a beautiful girl...

“Let me make this clear first, I don’t hate inhuman beauties, and will not dislike you no matter if you are human or not. Even if you transform into a pretty girl and I find you in my blanket naked in a cold morning, I won’t panic at all. And of course, you can keep staying in this mansion even if you are not human, so don’t worry. Not just that, I will grill delicious fish for you every day too.”

When it heard the word fish, Chomusuke who was enjoying its fur being brush raised its head and sniffed.

“Oh, you reacted to the word fish, you glutton. Listen up, Chomusuke. If you transform into a human, your size will increase and you can eat more fish. You understand?”

“Nya~”

After meowing in reply, it grunted at me as if it was asking me to brush its fur some more, snuggling its forehead against my hand that was holding the brush.

“Good, good, good, you are a cutie after all. Stay this way after turning into human form, alright? Don’t join into the ranks of those regrettable heroines. If you stay good, I will treat you to the meat of a chicken that just hatched.”

When I was ready to start brushing again after saying that, the door to the mansion suddenly opened.

“Kazuma! Let’s go hunt a bounty monster!!”

The queen of regrettable heroines that had me worried after not returning last night said something stupid when she came back in the morning.

“... What are you saying after playing outside until morning? Who you are intimidate with is none of my business, but you are still an unmarried daughter of a noble house, so don’t go too wild okay?”

“Moron, I didn’t spend the entire night raving! I thought it would trouble all of you if I came back in the middle of the night, so I went back to my home! Instead of that—!!”

Darkness came to my side and shoved a piece of paper to me who was sitting cross-legged on the carpet.

“Hurry, look at this!”

“... Bounty monster ‘Kowloon Hydra’? ... What is this, a monster like Yamata no Orochi?”

Darkness showed me a drawing of the bounty monster known as the Kowloon Hydra, with detailed information such as its habits besides it.

After I took the paper reluctantly, Darkness tilted her head and asked "Yamata no Orochi?"

"Kowloon Hydra. This fellow lives in the hills near Axel, a big bounty target that usually lies dormant. It will hibernate in the bottom of the lake after exhausting the mana inside its body, and will absorb mana from the land around it. The hydra will need ten years to replenish its mana after it hibernates. The last time it did so was about ten years ago."

Which means this fellow was waking soon?

From the details written on this piece of paper, its size was in a word, enormous.

It was about the size of a house.

And it looked scary.

From the name and appearance, it reminds me of the final boss in a game.

"You say you are going to hunt this thing... it might be foggy outside, but stop dreaming. And what is with that butler yesterday? Megumin was worried that the unworldly Darkness would just follow some weird nobles to some place unknowingly and have bad things done to you."

"Last night...! Last night's incident has nothing to do with you all. It is just some squabble between nobility, don't interfere unless you want to be dragged in. Instead of that, where is Megumin? If it is Megumin, she will definitely be hyped about this right!?"

"Megumin and Aqua went out. They wanted to prepare a cool collar for the dragon that is going to hatch."

"Aqua asked me to help her build a small house for the dragon after it hatches, but no matter how I look at that egg..."

I said to Darkness who had a complicated expression:

"It looks like a chicken egg... Anyway, I won't hunt something like that alright? If you want, just go with Megumin and Aqua. I won't go even if you cry and make a scene like usual."

"When did I ever make a scene! ...Actually there has been report that there is something wrong with the lake a few days ago. It seemed that weed has started growing out of the barren land around the lake. This meant the Hydra didn't need to absorb mana from the land anymore. Which is a sign that it is awakening."

After pausing for a moment, Darkness said loudly:

"... Listen well, Kazuma. The only ones who can save this city is our team that has taken down bosses of the Demon King Army! You are also an adventurer in this town, and want to protect this land right? ...The hero who defeated numerous bosses of the Demon King Army, Satou Kazuma! See, now is your chance to shine!!"

Standing before Darkness with sparkling eyes and clenched fist, I snickered.

"You think I am a moron who will charge forth after someone swoons over me and calls me a hero? After our time spent together, you should understand this much. Don't you have anything else that will motivate me? By the way, I am not talking about money alright? I have plenty of cash anyway. Think about it, there are other ways to get my attention right?"

After hearing what I said, Darkness lowered her head for a moment.

Finally, she clenched her fists and said with her cheeks flushed.

"...I-I get it... I will give you a reward that will make you happy after defeating the Kowloon Hydra. Erm.... A k-kiss to your cheek."

"Are you retarded? I'm not a kid, in this time and age, who will risk their lives for a kiss?"

"!?"

She probably made a huge resolution before deciding on this proposal, but my unexpected cold rejection made Darkness dumbfounded.

"In the end, just the thought that a mere kiss has such an exaggerated value irks me. Or rather, just how confident are you? Did the flattery from the nobles in the capital make you arrogant?"

"Why, you, you...!"

I picked up Chomusuke that was on my lap and said to it before the trembling Darkness:

"Hey Chomusuke. This Onee-san thinks that there would be a guy who will risk his life for her, huh? Just how high does she evaluate herself? Really, isn't there a better way to entice others?"

"Nya~"

Chomusuke purred as if it was replying to me.

"Oh, is that so, so you think the same huh. That's right, there are plenty other ways right?"

"Don't be cocky! Put the cat down, I will kill you!"

I enjoyed the sensation of Chomusuke's soft fur in front of Darkness who was shaking her fist with murderous eyes.

"Oh? What is it, is that the only method you know, by brute force? I have the skill 'bind' now. If I use that, you will be tied into a dumpling in an instant. You want to experience ticklish hell again? If that is what you want, bring it on!"

Before my arrogant taunts, Darkness' cheeks started turning red for unknown reasons.

"... Bind, huh. By the way, you even learned that skill before I realized it. O-okay. No problem, let's spar then. If you can bind me, I will let you do as you wish just like that time a few days back. But I won't give in just because you tie me up and toy with me a little!"

"What are you so happy about!? And I don't need to go anyway right? Just bringing Megumin along will do. No matter what that is, one shot from Megumin's spell will finish it off. If that doesn't work, just run away. In the end, Hydra is a subspecies of dragons right? The scales are tough, the powerless me can't do anything..."

As I was saying all this.

Darkness didn't lose her temper or pounce over.

She suddenly turned silent with a dejected face, which made me speechless.

... She wanted to defeat that bounty target that much huh.

"S-say... You really won't help, no matter what?"

Darkness squatted down and looked up at me with sad eyes.

... Using puppy eyes attacks, this girl was getting good at coercing others!

Part 7

— After journeying half a day south from Axel town, we could see a small hill.

Traveling deep into the hills, we reached a murky green lake.

“Neh, what if we fail to defeat the Hydra? If we attack now, wouldn’t the worst case scenario be us aggravating a docile monster?”

“No! I don’t want that!!”

Darkness replied to my question:

“That isn’t a problem. The way to fight the Kowloon Hydra in the past was to surround it with an army, make it exhaust its mana by rampaging around, so it would hibernate again after depleting its mana. And of course, the capital is keeping track of the time and will be sending a Knight Corps over soon.”

“I don’t want this Hydra or whatever ahhh! Why must Darkness aim for this bounty monster? Kazuma mentioned it occasionally too, but are you really an impoverished borderline noble? I will smash the piggy bank containing the money I worked so hard to save and lend it to you, can you just bear with it a while more!?”

I see, so there was the insurance of the Knight Corps even if we fail.

“But the Hydra has awakened before the Knight Corps is scheduled to arrive. Also, the Knight Corps can induce the Hydra into deep slumber, but they can’t finish it off. In that case, the root of the problem remain unsolved. That’s why you are asking me, who have defeated countless foes, correct?”

“Let me go back! Hey, please let me go back! I have a bad feeling about this!”

Since the Knight Corps was coming, we could just follow them and take out the Hydra together. Why is Darkness so anxious about subjugating the Hydra?



今回こそは『竜殺し』の
二つ名を頂きです!!

めぐみん

帰させて!
ねえお願い帰させて!
何だか嫌な予感が
するの!

At that moment, Megumin who was full of spirit took off her eye patch with a laugh.

“Fuhahaha, leave this to me! Hydra might be a subspecies, but it is still a lesser dragon. After defeating it, I can call myself a dragon slayer! I wanted the title of dragon slayer in the past, so I blew up a wyvern which is also a subspecies of dragons. But it was probably a youngling, and wasn’t recognized as a kill. I will take the title of ‘dragon slayer’ for sure this time.”

After hearing Megumin’s reliable words, I nodded and looked towards the center of the lake again.

“Alright, first off...”

“I still need to go back early to witness Emperor Zell’s birth! Waahhhh!!”

“You have been so noisy all this time! A chicken egg needs twenty days before it hatches, it’s still early! And it is about time you give that up. If you go back, who else can wake the Hydra!”

I couldn’t take it anymore and lectured Aqua who had been noisy all this while.

“Why would a chicken hatch from a dragon egg!? And why must the important Emperor Zell be entrusted to that sort of place!?”

The egg Aqua bought was placed in the care of Wiz’s shop.

“No choice, we couldn’t ask someone else to do something as stupid as incubating an egg. If we ask an adventurer we know to do that, there is a high chance it would be eaten.”

Now that I thought about it, I was a bit concerned about Wiz gulping when we handed her the egg.

“But, but, how can I pass the egg to a lich and a devil? I am worried about them negatively influencing Emperor Zell who is about to hatch! Dragon eggs will have higher mana and take from their parents the longer they are held! I hope the child would be a holy white dragon, but wouldn’t it be affected by dark powers and hatch into a black dragon!?”

"Even if it is black, it'll just be a crow. If you're that worried, then beat the Hydra fast and go back soon. If we can't beat it with Megumin's magic, there wouldn't be any other way. We'll just have to run then."

Aqua finally accepted it and became docile. At that moment, Darkness drew her sword.

"Alright, are you ready? Well then, let's begin, Aqua!"

The plan was simple.

Amphibious monsters tend to hate clean water.

So it was time for Aqua whose strange body type that was usually useless to shine.

"You guys can't do without me huh. Personally, I don't hate the act of purifying water... I will be back in a jiffy! If Megumin's spell doesn't work, you have to escape immediately alright!?"

Aqua then jumped into the murky lake unhesitantly.

Swimming in the lake, she took some water with her hands and splash it around, like a crazy woman.

Megumin muttered as she watch this scene from afar.

"... She is purifying the water? Isn't she just playing with water because it is too hot?"

Indeed, she look just like a retarded girl playing with water by herself, even though she was doing her job for the subjugation properly.

Watching from afar, we saw Aqua floating on the water with her eyes closed. She probably got tired of cleansing the vast lake.

"... Hey Kazuma, Aqua is taking a nap right on top of the place where the high bounty target is hibernating. Is that really fine? I have been thinking for a while now, why can Aqua purify water even without any chanting or gesturing to cast her spell?

"I am bothered by that too. I thought it was just another one of her party tricks, so I didn't comment on it."

“According to what she said, the reason is because she is the goddess of water.”

Even though I said that, the two of them didn’t believe it at all just as I expected. In the meanwhile, the goddess of water was drifting to the center of the lake because of the wind.

I was thinking about tying her with a rope so she wouldn’t drift away, but it was too late.

The three of us didn’t feel tense despite the surreal scene. Just when we were yawning from boredom.

When small ripples appeared on the surface of the water, the dozing Megumin opened her eyes wide—

“This is...! It’s here, it’s here! I can feel powerful mana clearly! The source is coming from the bottom of the lake!”

As Megumin was shouting urgently, a growing shadow appeared right under the sleeping Aqua.

Something unbelievably big was surfacing.

“Aqua! Stop sleeping, get up! It’s coming from below! Megumin can’t cast her spell with you floating there!”

Aqua woke after hearing my cries, and paddled the water deftly even though she just got up. She stretched and looked around her.

She probably realized the situation and swam our way in a panic.

“Hey, this is larger than what I was told! It was supposed to be the size of a large mansion, but this is much bigger than our home!”

Darkness and Megumin’s expression froze in the face of the shadow that was growing in the lake.

When I heard it was the size of a large mansion, I figured that Megumin’s spell should be able to work.

But with its size right now, she won't be able to blow it away in one shot.

"K-Kazuma, Kazuma! Something humongous is chasing after me!"

The gigantic shadow finally took form, and its eight heads could be clearly seen under the water.

The heads were reaching right for Aqua...!

"It's coming! Megumin, ready your spell! Darkness, stand before Megumin and defend if anything happens! I will secure our retreat route!"

"Leave the defence to me! But there are no other monsters, so securing the retreat route is unnecessary!"

"I-It might be larger than expected, b-but I will settle it with the power of my explosion magic! Watch me destroy the entire eco system of this lake!"

"Whatever, just hurry up!"

With no regards for our confusion, it appeared.

Ahh...

I seemed to be underestimating the bounty monsters because of my recent successes.

Eight giant serpentine heads slowly emerged, with water dripping from it.

"——Tsu!——Tsuuu!!!!"

The Hydra's roar shook the air, unleashing unspeakable terror.

Half of its back surfaced to the lake, the size of a small island.

Looking up at the snake head that rose high into the air, I muttered to myself:

"I can't deal with this shit."

CHAPTER 2

GIFTING THE LORD OF THE LAKE WITH ETERNAL SLUMBER!

Part 1

“Oh Kazuma. Your death was really pathetic!”

<TL note: Classic Dragon Quest game over message. 死んでしまうとは情けない!>

A familiar white room.

After opening my eyes with a start, I locked gaze with Eris who said that line enthusiastically.

This person might be unexpectedly mischievous.

And she knew about all sorts of things from Japan too.

“... You are in a great mood, Eris-sama.”

“Sorry. I always wanted to try saying that famous line once.”

Eris squinted her eyes with a naughty look.

When the extremely beautiful goddess acted this way, my heart skipped a beat.



The goddess scratch her cheeks with a troubled expression.

"By the way, Kazuma-san, you aren't frantic at all even though you're here... Well, the others are safe, they're far away from the Hydra right now. Kazuma-san's corpse has been retrieved after Darkness let the Hydra swallow her."

What a competent goddess.

She already told me about my comrades' safety before I even asked her.

"Intentionally letting the Hydra swallow her... That girl is really reckless."

Back then, we managed to retrieve Aqua who was chased by the Hydra, and Megumin casted explosion.

... Everything was fine then.

"Speaking of which, what the hell was that? That's foul play, growing back the heads it lost, there's no way we can defeat that right?"

I started complaining to Eris.

That's right, everything was fine until this point when it took a shot of Explosion.

However, the Hydra which lost some of its head started regenerating with magic.

And moved as if nothing happened.

And then...

"What happened to my body after I was eaten by the Hydra? I heard that you can't revive if the damage is too severe..."

Which meant that I would be dead for good.

"Eh... I-It's fine! You can revive!! About thirty percent of the body is lost, but it will work!"

I shouldn't have asked.

“... E-erm...!”

Looking at the dejected me, Eris asked timidly:

“After you resuscitate, please don’t be blame Darkness alright? She was the one who brought it up wilfully... But she had her reasons too... She is blaming herself for Kazuma-san’s death right now, and is taking it really hard. Of course, the one who suffered the most is Kazuma-san...”

Eris said worriedly with a frown as she consoled me.....

What a gentle person...

Was there someone like that around me?

Wiz? Yunyun?

No, the two of them were gentle, but Eris-sama made me feel warm from the bottom of my heart, and put me at ease.

“Don’t worry, I won’t blame her... Instead of that, Eris-sama mentioned that you will go down to the mortal world occasionally to have fun. How about visiting Axel? It feels lonely to not be able to meet you unless I die...”

When she heard what I said, Eris giggled.

“Actually, we already met plenty of times in the mortal world. It’s about time you notice me okay? I feel a little lonely too.”

She said mischievously...

... Hmm?

“What did you say? We met? Was it in Axel? Hmm? Ahh!?”

Even if she said that, my mind couldn’t keep up.

Met plenty of times?

When?

Eh, did I meet someone like her?

Seeing me falling into confusion, Eris said with a mischievous smile.

"I will give you a hint then. In the mortal world, my appearance is different from now. I am more energetic and my manner of speech is different."

Different appearance.

More energetic, different way of speaking...!

"And even though I am a goddess, I don't have to be an archpriest in the mortal world like Sempai..."

"Ahh, I know! It's Marise-san who broke Keith's nose after he teasingly said 'I heard the breast size of Eris priests are inversely proportionally to their faith, so it is true after all, wahahaha!'"

I interrupt the hint and shouted with confidence.

Eris said as she continued to smile:

"..... Wrong."

Huh?

Ahh, maybe that person!?

"After Dust who was looking for trouble said 'I heard the goddess Eris wears pads, won't her devotees get expelled for having large breasts? Are your ones real? Or are the two of you wearing pads!? If not, let me see it as proof!', the one who beat Dust up together with Darkness, Celeste-san!"

"No."

Eris was still smiling, but seemed a little angry.

Not Marise-san or Celeste-san...?

As I was thinking hard.

“Kazuma! Kazuma! The resuscitation is done, so hurry up and come back! Darkness who is smelly right now seemed very depressed! Come back quick!”

The voice of Aqua who couldn't read the mood as usual came.

I was concerned about the depressed Darkness, but instead of that.

“Eris-sama, I give! I give up, sorry! Please tell me the answer, please! If not, I will receive divine retribution if I did anything rude to Eris-sama unknowingly!”

Seeing that I couldn't guess correctly, Eris looked as if she was wondering what to do...

“... You are still talking about rude things and divine retribution now... Even though you did all that the first time we met...”

“Hmm?”

“Nothing. My real identity is a secret.”

Eris placed her index finger to her lips as she said that.

“... Also, please don't listen to everything Sempai says blindly okay? A-at least right now, I am not wearing pads!”

Eris snapped her fingers after saying that with flushed cheeks.

A familiar white door appeared before me.

I panicked after seeing that.

She hadn't told me her identity yet!

With no regards for the panicking me, the white door opened and brilliant light shone through...!

“Wait, Eris-sama, I'm sorry! You're angry right? Throwing a tantrum? No— I'm not really concerned about your breast size!”

“Well then, Satou Kazuma-san! I hope the next time I meet you after your life ends, you will know my identity! Fare well! Have a safe trip!”

The blushing Eris didn’t let me finish.

At this moment, probably because her face was red, I noticed a white scar on her right cheeks.

“Hmm? Eris-sama, your face...”

Has something on it— Before I could say that.

I was pushed into the door from behind by Eris with a ‘pomf’.

Part 2

“Welcome back Kazuma.”

When I opened my eyes, I found Aqua who was pinching her nose before me.

“Puah! That stinks!”

I jumped when the terrible stench entered my nose.

The stench was coming from...

“Me! The stench is coming from me!?”

It was probably due to the short amount of time I spent in the Hydra’s stomach, my body was covered in a horrendous stench.

... I then noticed.

That no one was willing to meet my eyes.

... And from that I realized.

That I was completely naked.

“Did my clothes melt...”

“They melted. Cover up. By the way Kazuma-san, you were digested so much that you became Ms Kazuma at one point. Your defensive gears are totalled, the only thing that survived is your strangely named katana that was in its sheathe.”

“Hmm? I can’t ignore the fact that you say the katana I named has a strange name!”

Ignoring Aqua who was being pounced on by Megumin, I held the katana that was the only thing left in my hand.

“... And so, why are you so depressed?”

I said to Darkness who smells terrible just like me, and was hugging her knees some distance away.

When Darkness heard me, she trembled and looked up with an apologetic look.

“Aren’t you angry about me forcing you to fight?”

“I’m not angry at all. You might be the one who wants to fight, but this isn’t the first time we are fighting high bounty monsters and bosses of the demon king army. I already died a few times too.”

“That is true...”

Facing Darkness who was weirdly straightforward, I couldn’t find my rhythm.

“Really, this isn’t like you at all. I already heard about it from Eris-sama okay? In order to save me after I was swallowed by the Hydra, didn’t you allow yourself to be swallowed too? On a closer look, you are covered in blood. Are you alright? You don’t look melted though.”

Darkness stole a glance at me and said:

“This blood are from the Hydra when I cut open its stomach from the inside after retrieving you. If I spent any more time inside, I would have joined you too... It’s fine now, I am not hurt anywhere else either.”

I said to Darkness who was still dejected.

“Collecting back my corpse was a big help, thanks. Let’s not idle here anymore, let’s go back and shower alright?”

I said with a smile, showing her that I didn’t mind at all.

“Hey Kazuma. It’s fine if you want to console Darkness, but it doesn’t feel right for you to ask someone to shower in that appearance.”

Speaking of which, I was still naked.

Part 3

“— However, I know why the Knight Corps didn’t deal the final blow to the Hydra. It’s not that they didn’t want to, but they couldn’t.”

On the way back to Axel.

With the awfully depressed Darkness in tow, we thought back about the battle.

“The Kowloon Hydra can use magic to regenerate its lost head. To defeat it, we have to use immensely strong firepower to blow it away beyond any chance of regenerating, or wound it numerous times to deplete its mana before dealing the final blow. Both ways are unrealistic...”

Megumin made a good point.

The Hydra wasn’t stupid either.

If you keep dealing damage to it, the Hydra would escape to the bottom of the lake to recuperate its mana.

That might be so, but there was no way to prepare firepower that exceeds Explosion.

I turned back and looked at Darkness who was dragging her feet at the very back.

“Megumin is right, there is no way to do it this time. We will leave the Hydra to the Knight Corps who will deplete its mana steadily and send it back to sleep. Darkness, you are fine with that right?”

“...Yeah.”

She was completely distracted.

... Why was she so adamant on defeating that bounty monster?

At that moment Aqua puffed her chest out and said arrogantly:

“Eh, it’s not all bad news alright? Thanks to me, that Hydra won’t leave the lake any time soon! I purified part of the lake so it will think its territory had been invaded, and

will focus on polluting the lake with its miasma. The Knight Corps will be here before it is done, so we can just dump the task onto them.”

“... Did you eat something wrong? You actually did a great job. That’s really smart.”

As the two of us were chatting happily, Megumin who was on Aqua’s back said something that might raise a flag:

“Whenever Aqua is filled with confidence, things will go badly in the end.”

I was the one who usually piggybacks Megumin, but she said I stink today and asked for Aqua.

“No no no, there shouldn’t be any problems this time. And it wouldn’t be our problem even if there is. After all, we actually bought some time for the Knight Corps.”

“That’s right, you have any problems with my good work!? Really, Megumin! If you say anything weird, I will let Kazuma or Darkness piggy pack you alright?”

“I apologize, please don’t do that, I beg of you!”

— We then returned to town safely.

“I will go with Megumin to report to the guild, the two of you stink, so hurry back to shower. After all, Kazuma’s dressing might make someone call the cops!”

After Aqua said that to Darkness and me, we prepared to return to the mansion.

I’m covering myself with Megumin’s cape right now, a stinking man in a cape looked really shady.

“Let’s go Megumin, we have to exaggerate our actions as much as possible! That way, even if we couldn’t get the bounty reward we can earn some consolation pay out!”

“Leave it to me, I will tell them just powerful my Explosion is!”

I was a bit worried, but I still left it to them and returned to the mansion with Darkness.

Part 4

After coming home, I let the depressed Darkness bathe first, then washed my body carefully to get rid of the odour.

“Being accustomed to something is scary. I died just now, but I’m not panicking at all.”

I muttered to myself as I entered the water, and looked at my body that was thirty percent lost at one point of time.

Aqua said I turned into Ms Kazuma for a while— Was the size back to normal?

As I was observing the part that was lost at some point.

“... Kazuma, you are bathing longer than usual, does it hurt anywhere? Or you have not recovered your strength because you just revived?”

Darkness’ worried voice came from the direction of the changing room.

“N-no problem, I’m fine! You see, it stinks really bad right? That’s why I am carefully cleaning myself!”

I couldn’t tell Darkness who was seriously worried about my health that I was worried and carefully checking my size.

But Darkness didn’t leave after hearing what I said.

She probably had something to say and just stood there.

“... Hey, Kazuma. Erm, it’s my fault this time for being wilful. Maybe things had been going too well recently and I got too impatient. But I want to defeat that Hydra no matter what...”

Darkness said bitterly in the changing room.

“Well, we won’t meet that thing again, so it’s fine. Instead of that, Aqua and the others are really slow. They must be eating something good in the guild. Let’s go too.”

“... Ugh. Yeah... You’re right...”

After hearing my reply Darkness made a dejected sound I had never heard before.

... Did this girl have some history with that Hydra?

Or maybe it had something to do with that rude butler who visited yesterday?

“Alright, I brought you a change of clothes. I will leave it here okay? I will be waiting in the living room...”

I said to Darkness who was going to leave the changing room.

“Do you have a hard to talk about reason why you had to defeat that Hydra?”

“Ugh!? T-that is...”

Seemed like there was.

I didn't know what to say to Darkness who turned silent.

Normally, I would reject challenging an opponent that killed me.

However, the young lady who was obviously depressed made me want to say that I would challenge it again.

“... It didn't work today, but let's come up with a proper plan to take on that Hydra next time, alright?”

“Hmm!?”

I teased Darkness when I heard her surprised gasp:

“What, even though you were on your high horses and talking about the safety of the people, are you going to give up on subjugating the Hydra?”

“What the hell are you talking about!? Who do you think I am!? Protecting the people is the duty of the Dustiness House! I will get that Hydra next time!!”

That usual violent speech returned Darkness to her usual self a little.

— After washing off the stubborn stench, the two of us went to the adventurers guild.

Aqua and Megumin should have finished their report.

When I opened the door to the guild...

“Why are you people always doing unnecessary things!?”

“That’s right! When Aqua-san changed the water in the fish tank into pure water last time, all the fishes caught from the sea died, isn’t that right!?”

“I-I thought it was better if we did that! It was the same for the fish shop, the poor fishes were living in a cramped tank, so I wanted to at least make their water cleaner!!”

“What should we do! We can’t handle a big shot like the Kowloon Hydra!!”

“Mama, I want to go home!”

“Wanted posters, post more wanted posters! Spread the posters to all the adventurers in town!”

Whispers could be heard everywhere as the adventurers and staff shouted.

Aqua who was being accused in the center of the commotion started wailing.

“Ah! Kazuma, Darkness, you came at the right time! Help me take care of this scene!!

Megumin who caught sight of us rushed to our side amidst the chaotic guild.

“No, what is happening here? Why are things so bad? I can see Aqua is getting blamed, but we didn’t do anything wrong this time right?”

“T-that’s right! The Hydra will wake up sooner or later even if we don’t do anything, so there shouldn’t be such a commotion but...”

Megumin wasn’t good at dealing with a crisis, so Darkness grabbed a nearby staff Onee-san and asked:

“Hey, what happened? The subjugation failed, but it’s not that bad right? Isn’t this a subjugation that wouldn’t be a big deal since the Knight Corps is coming?”

“W-well, a big incident happened recently... The Knight Corps is busy dealing with it and didn't have the time to come here...”

A big incident in the capital!?

“Hey, what happened!? A crisis in the capital!? Is my cute sister in danger!?”

“S-sister? No, the incident happened quite some time ago, and was sort of resolved without any major repercussion. The Knight Corps is sent to restore order in the chaotic capital and search for the criminal who instigated the incident...”

I was relieved after hearing what the staff said.

I was thinking about charging to the capital for a moment there.

“From what I heard, a duo calling themselves the Silver Haired Thieving Group infiltrated the castle...”

Darkness and I spitted out the air in our mouths at the same time.

The staff didn't notice and took out a slip of paper.

“With just the two of them, they defeated the knights in the castle and powerful adventurers, and boisterously stole several treasures...”

As she said that, she handed the paper in her hand to us, which was a wanted poster for the ‘Silver Haired Thieving Group’.

On it was an illustration of a suspicious masked man and a silver haired youth.

The bounty was two hundred million Eris.

How could this be, the bounty was only second to the bosses of the demon king army...

“Two hundred million Eris.... Two hundred million Eris...”

“Hey Darkness, why are you looking at me like that?”

Darkness who was usually uninterested in money looked at me with red eyes with the wanted posters in hand.

The staff was baffled by our actions.

"Eh, in summary, the Knight Corps that was supposed to be dispatched here won't be coming any time soon."

Oh no, didn't that mean we stirred up serious trouble?

I wasn't sure if she understood the troubles in my heart.

"However, there is still hope. The knights from the capital specifically made a trip to the Home of the Crimson Magic and asked a highly skilled diviner to determine where the culprit had gone to... And the divinations showed that the main culprit is right here in Axel! And so, the adventurers are searching for the criminal zealously right now!!"

I started sweating bullets.

"Anyway, I am looking forward to Satou Kazuma's team's performance. After all, your team run into bounty targets frequently! If you can capture the criminal, the Knight Corps can rest easy and dispatch a team over here!"

"You are right."

After replying emotionlessly, Darkness hit me with her elbow, as if to ask me to act casual.

"Sigh, it is only a matter of time before the culprit is caught. We have a diviner even more powerful than the Home of the Crimson Magic diviner here in Axel!"

She must be referring to that fellow who wore a mask that looked similar to the masked man in the wanted poster, I know him too.

Oh no, even though we were business partners, that devil who wanted money badly won't hesitate in selling me out.

Darkness who was besides me quivered with a stiff face.

The staff clenched her fists in expectation—

"In summary, please give us a hand too, Satou-san!"

She said with a face full of smiles.

— Naturally, I stayed home.

Part 5

“One day~, in the forest~, I met a~, dragon~”

Aqua dragged the couch to the window and knelt on it, singing a song while looking at the rain.

She was cradling the egg in her hand as usual, a warm light from her palm covered its shell.

According to Aqua, she was performing prenatal education for the fetus inside the egg through song.

Right now in this living room, Megumin’s clamouring was overwhelming Aqua’s singing.

“Kazuma, revenge! I want to get my revenge against that Hydra!”

She said amidst heavy breathing as I brushed the fur of Chomusuke who was on my lap.

It had been three days since I escaped from the adventurer’s guild.

After I knew I was wanted by the kingdom, I stayed near Aqua to guard against Vanir’s precognitive powers, and shut myself in the mansion.

The stingy devil couldn’t divine the fortune of people around Aqua very well.

Fortunately, Aqua who was busy incubating the egg was also staying put in the mansion.

Megumin probably couldn’t stand the stay at home lifestyle and kept urging me to take revenge.

“You might be saying that now, but how are we going to defeat that monster? I thought about it a lot, but I can’t come up with a good plan.”

When Megumin heard what I said, she hugged her staff tight and grit her teeth.

“Firepower! Use stronger firepower to blow its face up! If one explosion isn’t enough, use consecutive explosion to blast it to bits! Just like the time we fought the Destroyer, with Aqua’s mana and Kazuma’s Drain Touch, it would be possible!”

After hearing Megumin’s passionate speech, Aqua stopped her song.

“Don’t wanna. Why must I suffer the dirty Lich skill, Drain Touch? I won’t ever do it again. That’s right, even if Kazuma threatens me, Darkness coaxes me, or if Megumin acts strangely, I won’t do it. My holy mana isn’t meant to be used by others carelessly.”

I combed the fur on Chomsuke’s tail gently and said:

“And what have been doing with that holy mana all this while? You don’t need to keep cradling the egg, just warm it before the fireplace will be good enough right? If it is overheated, just treat it as a snack and eat it.”

“Hey you, I will let you taste my God Blow if you keep saying snacks or whatever... I am injecting mana into a dragon egg. Dragons which are the crystallization of mana will be stronger if it has more mana. This child will rule over the dragons from the peak. As the parent raising this child, I want to do whatever I can for it.”

... Ignoring Aqua who stubbornly insisted that was a dragon egg.

“By the way, why are you thinking of revenge, Megumin? Aside from Darkness who displayed an abnormal obsession over the Hydra, do you have some history with that thing too?”

“Well, I have been thinking too. It killed Kazuma once before. Won’t I feel really happy if I defeat such an opponent?”

“Eh, ohh... I-is that so...”

If she put it that way, it makes me feel a little guilty...

“Recently, I had been going after the Hydra together with Darkness. Darkness would draw the Hydra out with taunting skills, and we would escape after casting explosion. Even though we are challenging it this way... Could there be a better strategy?”

“That’s why I was wondering why I didn’t hear the familiar sound outside the town recently, so you had been doing something like that! It’s not showing any intention of

attacking the town, so don't aggravate it! And what are you doing, Darkness, shouldn't you stop her at a time like this!?"

"Ugh, erm... But I want to defeat that Hydra no matter what... And this will deplete the mana of the Hydra too..."

Darkness who was polishing her armour on the rug muttered softly as she averted her eyes.

This girl wanted to subjugate the Hydra personally no matter what.

I didn't understand the reason though...

"It would be inconvenient to move if the rain doesn't stop, so it can't be helped. The opponent lives in water, it will have the advantage if we fight in the rain. I will show my true strength after the rain stops."

But honestly speaking, I want to hide at home until my wanted notice dies down.

"It's the rainy season right now right? The weather diviner said that the rain will go on for quite a while."

"... I will show my true strength when the rain stops."

"This guy! So you won't be motivated any time soon right!?"

"Ah, what are you doing, stop! Don't vent your anger on Chomsuke!"

Only Darkness was working hard on her armour with a serious face.

She ignored Megumin who was grabbing Chomsuke's tail and obstructing me from brushing its fur.

Part 6

The rain didn't stop for the next few days.

While Aqua and I shut ourselves in, Darkness and Megumin visited the Hydra every day.

Of course, today too—

"We are back! Sorry, Darkness is a bit inconvenient, could you please prepare the bath!?"

Darkness who was piggybacking Megumin came back with a smelly stench.

"... So you got eaten. By the way, didn't you two escape right after casting explosion? It's dangerous, don't go there anymore."

Darkness put Megumin who couldn't move after depleting her mana onto the rug, then took off her armour as she breathed heavily.

The armour she was so proud off and polished a few days ago was covered in scratches, and stained with the red blood of the Hydra.

"That fellow probably had enough of the daily explosion, and struck preemptively before I could use my taunt. Megumin was chanting explosion the moment it attacked, it was a close call... After we got out, Megumin shot it with explosion and we escaped as it was regenerating its head... It is not so simple after all."

Darkness sighed deeply as Aqua came to her side to heal her. After taking off her armour, Darkness thanked Aqua and dragged her feet into the bath.

"... Hey Kazuma. Can't you think of an easy way to finish off the Hydra? The strong point of the weak Kazuma is your numerous half baked skills, and your ability to use despicable means to solve any problems, right?"

"Oh, I thought of one. We will bind you up with chains and throw you into the lake. When the Hydra eats you, we will gather all the adventurers and pull the Hydra to shore. We will then gang up on it and give it a good beating before it can escape back into the lake... How about it?"

“.....”

I grabbed the egg from Aqua who pounced over, and shooed her away with the egg as hostage.

“For me, I have no complains about casting explosion on strong enemies... But recently, Darkness seems weird.”

Megumin mumbled softly as she watch Darkness walked to the bath.

“— Phew...? Kazuma, what are you doing with my armour?”

After finishing her bath, Darkness tilted her head at me as I was squatting before her armour.

Megumin was watching me as I worked.

“You damaged your armour in plenty of places today, so I am fixing it up for you. It had been raining these few days, and I have nothing to do in the house anyway.”

I knocked on the dented areas with a wooden hammer, and activated my crafting skills that I have not used for a long time to repair the armour.

Darkness said a little shyly in reply:

“Speaking of which, you also fixed my armour when we went to the hot spring... I want to go on another hot spring trip with everyone once more.”

“I don’t wanna, I hate that city. There are too many people with their screw loose like Megumin.”

“Hey, say that again clearly!”

I shoved Megumin who was hindering my repairs away. Darkness looked at us happily:

“Even so, I want to go again...”

She said in a soft voice that seemed to harbour deep meaning behind it.

— Some time after that.

“Kazuma, she’s not here! She was already gone when I went to her room to wake her up!”

“That girl! I already told her not to go, why won’t she listen!”

Darkness who told Megumin that it would be dangerous had been challenging the Hydra on her own these few days.

She disregarded our advice and keep on returning with wounds all over after making a trip to the lake.

To stop Darkness, we took turns keeping watch...

“Why did you doze off ah———!”

“Wahhh! It’s tiring to incubate Emperor Zell! raising a kid is hard work, be more considerate towards me!”

“Stop kidding me about raising a child! Hand that egg over! I will cook that damn thing nice and fresh!”

“Stop! I already warmed it for so many days, something terrible will happen if it cracks now! You will regret it if you look inside!

In the face of Aqua who curled up like a turtle, I roared angrily.

“I don’t care about that egg, Darkness is the priority!! What is she thinking! Did she talk about the obligation of a crusader and the duty of the nobles is to protect the town again!?”

“Now is not the time to determine Darkness’ intentions. The Hydra is also learning and Darkness’ injury is getting worse every day, it’s dangerous!?”

Megumin who couldn’t handle unexpected situations said awkwardly as she hugged her staff.

That might be so, but Darkness probably left before dawn.

"Hey Kazuma. Is there no way to take out that Hydra? I will drop the egg off at Wiz's shop, then chase after Darkness with Megumin to lecture her... You probably have a phobia against the opponent that killed you once, but Kazuma, do you want to come along?"

Aqua who hated fighting maintained her balled up pose and said something that was seldom heard.

Even this girl was showing her drive.

Being the only one hiding at home would be a little...

... Ahh, damn it!

"I am going to some place, the two of you try to bring Darkness back. Even if you encounter the Hydra, don't engage and run straight back, alright?"

After hearing what I said, Aqua and Megumin nodded seriously and went out.

Now that I was home alone, I pulled out Eris notes from my room and stuffed it into my wallet.

"That girl is really a handful ahhhh!"

I made up my mind for that stubborn young lady too.

Part 7

The next day.

I set off for the lake early in the morning.

In the end, Aqua and Megumin met with injured Darkness who was returning from the lake.

Darkness told me with a wry smile about how she was lectured on the way after Aqua healed her wounds.

That girl had no intention of stopping her campaign against the Hydra.

I stood before the lake, waiting for Darkness who will probably come with Aqua and Megumin.

When it was almost noon, Darkness who appeared with Aqua was stupefied when she saw us.

That's right, she saw the adventurers in Axel who were sitting behind me.

"Oh! You sure took your time, Lalatina!"

"Lalatina-chan is here!"

"Lalatina!"

"Lalatina!"

The adventurers I brought along started teasing Darkness who stood stiff on the spot.

"....."

"S-stop it, Lalatina! Those guys were just calling your name, don't strangle me silently like that! Stop... Please stop!"

Lalatina who was being teased by the adventurers grabbed my collar with tears in her eyes.

"Hey Kazuma, what is happening here? If this is your new way of harassing me, I have my thoughts about that too."

"That's not it, why would I gather so many people to do something so stupid!? I just told everyone that you are challenging the Hydra alone here every day, and asked if they could help you!"

"!?"

Darkness released my collar and looked at the crowd frantically.

"Oh, even Lalatina can get embarrassed."

"Don't say that, Lalatina-chan might look like that, but she is actually very delicate alright? To defeat the Hydra, Lalatina-chan's strength is needed. What if you make her cry and run back?"

"Kazuma had been treating us to food and drinks recently, he even bought us the most expensive drinks yesterday! It's only natural to return the favour. Let's go along with Lalatina's wilfulness!"

The adventurers said out loud.

"Take a good look, Darkness. I merely told them that you were doing something silly every day, and managed to gather so many adventurers. I can't do anything about your muscled filled brain, but don't make others too worried."

The flushed face Darkness replied in a soft voice.

"T-thank you..."

"Hmm? What did you say!?"

Darkness glared at me as I asked her to repeat herself loudly, but she still looked at the adventurers around her shyly.

The adventurers who met Darkness' eyes either got embarrassed or smiled.

Darkness smiled too when she saw their reaction.

“Everyone, I am very—”

“Waahhhh—! Kazuma, Kazuma—!! The Hydra woke up earlier than usual for some reason!”

Aqua who went into the lake before I noticed interrupted Darkness' words of thanks and started shouting.

At the same time, Megumin who was preparing her spell near the lake yelled.

“Like I said, it's better to wait for Kazuma's signal before waking the Hydra!”

“But, but!! I want to go back earlier to witness Emperor Zell's birth...!”

Darkness who made up her mind to thank everyone was cut off at the worse timing, and she started quivering with her face red from embarrassment.

The Kowloon Hydra that was chasing Aqua appeared with a huge splash.

“Why do you people always do that!? The emotional scene is totally ruined!!”

The battle begun—!

Part 8

It started a little early, but that was how a battle should be.

“All thieves, did you bring your steel wire!? Archers, standby with your arrow that has a hook rope tied to it!”

“Waahhhh, hurry up! Hurry up!”

Step one was to let Aqua wake the Hydra and draw it to the lake side.

“Tough adventurers protect the backline, stand by as human shields!”

Next, vanguards wearing armour will protect the backliners from the Hydra’s attack.

“Mages prepare to fire off your magic and stand by! Use the most powerful spell you have! Don’t need to save for the next attack, use all the mana you have in one shot!”

“Leave it to me! I will blow that damn Hydra away with my explosion this time!!”

I made the mages prepare their attack to deal the last blow to the Hydra.

Finally...

“Darkness, use your Decoy skills right in front of the Hydra! Your toughness will be the key to this fight!! Don’t die too easily!”

“Who do you think I am!? Other things aside, my defence won’t lose to anyone!”

Darkness attracted the Hydra’s attention and blocked it from the front!

“Hey Kazuma! What about me? What should I do!?”

“After casting support spells on everyone, you don’t need to do anything unless someone gets injured! Go and cheer them on, don’t get in my way!”

“What! Let me play a big role too!!”

After that, as Darkness was blocking the Hydra’s movement...!

“Darkness, I’m leaving it to you!”

“You can count on it! Your opponent is me! Decoy!”

Darkness who took a stance by the water activated her decoy skill.

When all the heads of the Hydra focused on Darkness, I used hide to erased my presence as much as possible, and charged the Hydra.

Darkness was frowning, but still managed to withstand the fierce attack from the eight heads that would send anyone, including me to Eris in just one hit.

“Bind!” x4

The instant when the Hydra turned all its eight heads to the same spot, all the thieves used bind on the long necks and tied it with wires.

At the same time, the archers shot out arrows with hook ropes attached.

Although the hooks were deflected by the hard scales of the Hydra, it still managed to get entangled with the wires binding the necks.

After confirming the hooks were secured, the adventurers grabbed onto the other end of the rope and pulled as if they were competing in a tug of war.

We dragged it far from the lake, preventing it from escaping.

At the same time, I erased my presence and drew near, climbing onto the back of the Hydra whose heads were focused on Darkness even though it were bounded. I touched the hard scales up close.

“If you won’t go down unless your mana dries up, I will suck you dry!”

The moment I used Drain Touch, the Hydra started to thrash about wildly.

As expected of dragons that were known as the crystallization of mana, it was sensitive to the fact that its mana was being absorbed.

“Yosh! It’s working it’s working... Woahhh!?”

Realizing its mana was being siphoned, the Hydra started struggling in an attempt to break the bounds on its neck. But the bounds held and the eight heads couldn't reach its back.

At this moment, one of the adventurers screamed:

"Get out of there Kazuma! Are you dumb!? What the hell are you thinking, going way up there!?"

"It's fine, watch me use my secret skill to weaken this big fellow! Tell the mages to get ready to bombard once its mana is depleted...!"

When I was saying that, the Hydra twisted its body in an attempt to rub its back against the ground.

Wait...!

"Wahhhh, I'm going to get squashed!"

"Moron! What are you doing!!"

Darkness who was in front of the Hydra grabbed onto me as after I was thrown off the back of the Hydra, and pinned me under her.

Despite the situation, my face was beet red because of how close I was to Darkness' face.

The Hydra's colossal body rolled on top of us, and Darkness protected me from being crushed by propping herself up with her arms.

"As expected of Lady Dustiness, your arm power and endurance is marvellous."

"Is this the time to say that!? Ugh, I can't, hold on...!"

If we get crushed like this, leaving Darkness aside, I will suffer a horrible fate.

While I was pinned under Darkness who was pushing up against the ground with a flushed face, I reached out for the Hydra that was right on top of us.

"Darkness, not yet! Endure it and don't let up! Stay in that position!"

“!?! You are going for abandonment play now? N-no, I really can’t...!”

Darkness challenged the Hydra every day despite being wounded all over, grinding away its mana slowly and steadily.

How could I give up this chance and waste all the effort of this girl!

I used Drain Touch with all I have got despite the situation and started lecturing Darkness.

“You have always been useless, and when your chance to be of use come, you are going to let it end like this!? Aren’t you planning to defend your title in the endurance tournament this year too!? If you can’t even endure this thing, can you even win!? How spineless! Can you show your shameful appearance before all the adventurers here!?”

“Ugh, the Hydra’s heavy play and the verbal abuse play from this demonic man, what a reward this is...! Of all days, why does it have to be now...!”

Darkness face was red and trembling, her neck was full of sweat and a bit of tears were in her eyes, but she still hung on.

As I sucked the mana of the Hydra at full force, the Hydra swung its necks that were bound, struggling as it laid on top of Darkness.

“Pull, pull now!”

The heavyweight adventurers who had been serving as the human shields of the backline pulled on the ropes entangled on the Hydra hard.

They were probably trying to rescue Darkness who was trapped below.

Darkness had a satisfied smile as she said softly with her voice breaking intermittently.

“I-I... can’t... K-Kazuma... Don’t worry... We will die... together...”

“How will that stop me from worrying, don’t give up! In the end I will be the only one who will die! You even received magic buffs, and won’t die just by being crushed by the Hydra a little!!”

All my gears except my katana were melted, so I was still wearing casual clothes.

If I get squashed in such a situation, my weak defence won't even buy me any time before I kick the bucket.

I would rather not die twice in such a short period of time!

"I-If I give up, Kazuma will die... Ahhh, what is this situation...! Even though you are ordering me to hold on like a master, your life is in my hands, how contradictory...! Who is the master in such a situation!? This is a new feeling, a new feeling, Kazuma...!"

This girl was enjoying herself huh. Her stubbornness and serious expression when she challenged the Hydra alone were gone.

... When I my was just a step away from death.

"Look, the Hydra is becoming really weak right!? And it can't move too! I will take the head of the large bounty target, the Kowloon Hydra! The one who scores the last hit can collect the entire bounty, I don't want to share it with anyone else!"

"W-wait, what are you talking about in this situation!? And even though it is immobile, if you let down your guard because its necks are tied together... Ahhh! Dust! Dust!!"

I heard a familiar scream, and the pressure on us suddenly let up.

It seemed that a brave soul had drawn the attention of the Hydra.

We crawled out from under the struggling Hydra and ran towards Megumin.

"Light of Saber!"

After hearing that spell plenty of times in the Home of the Crimson Magic, I looked towards the source and saw Yunyun from the Crimson Magic Clan join the fray and cut off a head of the Hydra.

Seemed like someone was eaten and Yunyun saved him.

... Speaking of which I finally noticed that Yunyun who had a weak sense of presence followed along.

No, on the way here, I remember someone chatting to me timidly, but because my mind was occupied by Darkness... At that moment, someone from the adventurers shouted.

“Hey look, the head that was cut off didn’t regenerate!?”

I looked over when I heard that shout, and saw that the Hydra only had seven heads.

The Hydra wanted to escape back into the lake, but the heavyweight adventurers pulled on the rope, but letting it go.

“All mages!!”

When they heard my yell, they all focused their mana and prepared to cast their strongest magic, waiting for the signal with sparkling eyes.

“Attack!!”

On my mark, large number of spells flew towards the Hydra.

Amongst the flying fireballs and lightning, the two Crimson Magic Clansmen showed their might.

“Light of Saber!!”

After chopping down at the Hydra with a brilliant light, Yunyun showed a smug expression at Megumin.

Megumin raised the corners of her lips, pointing her staff at the Hydra with light shining from her vermillion eyes.

“Explosion is coming! Everyone near the water evacuate!”

“Cover your ears!”

After living in Axel for so long, the adventurers who had gotten used to Megumin’s spell covered their ears in a practiced manner.

“Kazuma, I will avenge you now! A bouquet for the one in heaven...!”

Hey wait, avenging me is fine, but I wasn't in heaven, but right here.

"Explosion—!!"

The brilliant light from Megumin's palm pierced the Kowloon Hydra that was on the brink of death after taking hits from numerous spells.

The large bounty monster that turned the area around this place barren all year round didn't even scream before falling into eternal slumber—

Part 9

“Admit my victory! I blew off six of the Hydra’s heads! Yunyun only cut off two! It is obvious who has the upper hand!”

“W-what is that Megumin, you are just waiting idly before the Hydra was pushed to the verge of dying! I even saved someone who was bitten by the Hydra, that should count too!!”

“Saving a delinquent who wanted to hog all the bounty should only count for one point. You are a Crimson Magic Clansman too, you should understand the importance of stealing the limelight!”

After subjugating the Hydra, we and the large number of adventurers returned to Axel in high spirits.

Megumin forcefully named Yunyun to piggyback her, and they had been bickering besides me all this while.

Even though the opponent was a large bounty monster, the only casualty was one person.

And that person was resuscitated by Aqua.

“But we are more capable than we thought! Ara~ but we wouldn’t have made it without Kazuma’s party.”

“That’s right, Kazuma is great as expected! Even though we agreed the bounty for the Hydra would be shared equally, but Kazuma’s group should take more. There’s a moron who said ‘The one who scores the last hit can collect the entire bounty’, so take that share with you too.”

Keith and Rin who formed a party with me before told me.

However, this raid only succeeded because of everyone.

That’s why...

“Well then... Everyone must be tired after the intense battle with the Hydra, let's rest for today and drink our hearts out with the reward tomorrow!”

“Yeeaaahhh!”

“Are you kidding me ahhh!”

Even though I thought I heard someone screamed, I still shift my eyes to Darkness who was walking happily besides me.

Darkness who looked anxious and sad recently had a refreshing expression as if her burden was all gone.

“Hey, how does it feel after you defeat the Hydra you are so obsessed over? You can sleep soundly from tomorrow onwards right?”

“Yeah, thanks to this, all sort of things seem trivial to me now. I think brooding over it by myself is silly. But that isn't because we took down the Hydra.”

I saw Darkness smiled for the first time in many days.

“I learned once again how much I like the people in town. Thanks to them, I found my way again. There is nothing to be afraid of, nothing to regret.”

“You will say really embarrassing things sometimes.”

Darkness elbowed my sides a little angrily after I teased her. And then...

“I am really blessed.”

She said something embarrassing openly again.

“Really, show more reverence to me! Say that you are very grateful to Aqua-sama for granting you a new life, compliment me more!”

“Hey Kazuma! I am thankful for being revived, but the priest from your party is really annoying!”

CHAPTER 3

LECTURING THE GIRL WHO RAN AWAY FROM HOME!

Part 1

“Adventurers! Thank you for your hard work yesterday!! Congratulations on the successful subjugation of the large bounty monster ‘Kowloon Hydra’! Everyone will receive a grand reward too!”

“Woaaahhhh!!” x4

When they heard the announcement by the staff, cheers echoed throughout the guild.

After defeating the Kowloon Hydra and recovering from the fatigue of the intense battle, we gathered in the adventurer’s guild.

Right now, all the adventurers who took part in the raid were here.

Everyone was probably looking forward to the bounty and they were all smiles.

“Speaking of which, we’re finally going to accept the reward, why isn’t Darkness here yet? Did she forget about the party that’s going to be held today? Or is she still embarrassed about what happened yesterday?”

“That might be so. Last night, Darkness was much more tensed up than usual. She normally doesn’t drink much, but got dead drunk that time. She would lecture me whenever I wanted to drink, but Darkness actually offered me some...”

At the table in the center of the guild, we thought about Darkness who was really excited last night.

“Darkness might be the eldest among us, but she’s like a child in many ways. She’s a useless child who gets shy easily, so it’s understandable why she won’t come out to meet everyone. Let’s buy some gifts for Darkness who is house sitting.”

Aqua nimbly twirled the egg in her hand, showering it with warm light as usual, acting all matured.

"Why are you nonchalantly treating Darkness as the oldest and making yourself look young? Aren't you a grandma in terms of age?"

"I told you before right, Satou Kazuma-san? If you say something like that, you really will suffer divine retribution. I will curse you and the cold drink you ordered will become warm instantly."

I ignored Aqua who was speaking foolishly with a straight face and watched the adventurers collecting their pay out happily.

The one billion Eris bounty was divided equally among all the participants.

One billion Eris.

The bounty for that monster was one billion Eris.

They said that without the Hydra, the land around the lake would become fertile.

The amazing one billion Eris bounty was the reward for opening up vast land for cultivation with the death of the Hydra.

The number of adventurers who participated was about fifty.

Which meant twenty million Eris each.

The adventurers were called by name one after another, and finally, it was my turn.

"Satou Kazuma-san's team of four will receive eighty million Eris, and with the request of all the other participants, they will receive an additional twenty million Eris. Please accept this one hundred million Eris!"

"Thank you very much! Alright everyone! The twenty million Eris, will be used to treat... Hey, hey let go! Why are you so reluctant to give me the bounty recently? Hey, give it to me!"

After snatching the bag of money from the staff.

"Hey everyone! Thank you again for the support yesterday! Let's have a party!!"

"Ooohhh!" x4

The rowdy cheers filled the entire guild.

It was still noon, but we probably won't be going back any time soon—

Part 2

After the sun had completely set behind the horizon, we walked on the street leading back to the mansion.

With the successful subjugation of the Hydra, we unhesitantly bought higher class food than what we usually ate.

We planned to use these to have an after party with Darkness who was house sitting.

What we bought were Snow Crimson Crabs.

A high class dish we haven't had since Darkness' folks sent us some the last time.

Aqua became really excited after seeing these.

“—Hey Darkness, we are... back...? Hmm, where is that girl? She went out?”

We reached home, but Darkness wasn't there.

At this moment, I noticed a piece of paper on the table.

It was Darkness' handwriting, she said she was going to the Landlord's place to report about the subjugation of the Hydra.

The mansion of the landlord that was destroyed by me seemed to be ready.

Aqua took out the egg from her pocket the moment she got home, and sat on the couch to resume her work of incubating the egg. Like a chick waiting to be fed, she asked noisily for dinner to be served.

“Hey, stop asking. Even if the dishes are done, we have to wait for Darkness to come back right? And don't just incubate the chick, help with the chores too. Are you cleaning the toilets properly?”

“Really Kazuma, I think you should be nicer to a woman raising a child. And stop calling it a chick. If you keep bullying this child, I wouldn't even care if Emperor Zell bites you after it hatches alright?”

In the end, Megumin and I guessed that Darkness will come back later and made dinner.

The other person had to incubate the egg, so she sat idly on the couch.

After cooking up dishes that were more lavish than usual, we set them on the dining table in the living room.

“Hey Kazuma, why isn’t Darkness back yet? I can’t hold it anymore with the food right in front of me. Hurry up and find Darkness, hurry up.”

“You didn’t fork out the money or cook the meal, you think you’re some kind of princess?”

While I was talking with Aqua, Megumin prepared four sets of cutleries and tea.

“We put quite a bit of effort into the meal tonight. Even the noble lady Darkness won’t be able to eat this often. Fufufu, I am looking forward to her reaction after eating my dish.”

“Didn’t you only add some salt and set the dishes?”

But I understand why Megumin was so proud of it.

It might be a bit off for me to say this myself, but the meal tonight was really well done.

After visiting various delicious restaurants, I wasn’t that easily satisfied with food anymore. Hence, I paid some money to learn a ‘cooking’ skill from someone.

After all, I planned to limit my adventuring time to the realm of a hobby.

That’s why, instead of combat related skills, I chose something that will raise my daily standard of living.

I already earned a fortune, it would be nice to open a restaurant myself too... I thought about various things as I waited impatiently for Darkness to return.

— Finally, late into the night.

After so long, Darkness still had not returned.

"Hey Kazuma! The dishes are cold, reheat it."

"... The meal is right before me but I have to wait... I'm not Darkness, I won't be happy with such a Play... After she comes back, I will punish her by making her sit in front of the couch, and finishing the meal in front of her."

"I don't think that's really a punishment, it's more like a... Frankly speaking, she's too slow. I already told her we would be back before dinner, what is she doing. Was it just like Vanir divined, and something happened to her House? Even so, she should tell us what happened."

Everyone complained as we waited.

In the end, the frustration turned into anger, and it turned into a conference on how to punish Darkness after she comes back.

We seriously thought about the most effective way of dealing with that woman who treats most punishments as a reward.

Even so, the suggestion that 'we should eat first' didn't come up.

And so, we decided to make her wear the super cute attire designed by Aqua and parade in the streets and the guild. And even if it was just for a day, we would rent the super expensive magic camera and hold a photoshoot.

When we decided on Darkness' punishment, it was almost time to flip to the next page of the calendar.

"... So slow."

Even though Aqua said that, no one made any move to eat.

Did reporting the successful subjugation of the Hydra need so much time?

I don't think that lecherous landlord would do anything to Darkness who was a noble... Maybe she wouldn't return today even if we wait like this.

If she comes back early the next morning again, I will go all out to punish her.



"She probably won't return tonight. Really, at least give us a heads up if you're not coming back... Hey, let's eat."

Despite what I said, the two of them showed a troubled expression and refused to move their utensils.

...Ahh, damn it!

That little M, I will make her cry for real.

I will borrow Vanir for over an hour or so, and conduct a thorough interview of shame.

That's right, it's a plan.

The later she returns, the longer Vanir's interrogation would be.

I made up my mind in secret.

But Darkness didn't return today.

Or the next day.

Or the day after.

Darkness didn't return—

Part 3

“Hey Kazuma, what is that? What are you making?”

Besides the table in the living room, I was working hard since early in the morning.

I picked it up and showed Aqua the thing I was making

It was an imitation of a dynamite.

Just like what Nobel made in the beginning by bundling solidified Nitroglycerin and sand together with paper, along with a fuse to create a simple bomb.

Nitroglycerine had not been discovered in this world yet, and there wasn't any gun powder to make a fuse either, so igniting this thing won't make it explode either.

And since I don't understand the underlying principles clearly, I won't be able to recreate it...

“I just have a rough idea of the principle and appearance, but couldn't craft the item because of the lack of materials, but I can still make a rough shape of it. Despite that, someone smart enough will find a replacement for nitroglycerine and buy this.”

“I see, bringing advanced weapon technology to this country right!? Kazuma... You really are scary...!”

Even though I didn't think there was a market for items like this, I still made it just in case someone wanted to buy it. Aqua cradled the egg as she picked up the dynamite imitation and observed it.

There was a reason why I started developing it.

Early this morning, we received a letter from Darkness.

“What is the thing Aqua is holding used for?”

Megumin who was reading Darkness' letter seriously lifted her head and asked.

“This is an imitation of a magic item called dynamite, to recreate Explosion Magic.”

“!?”

Megumin snatched the item from Aqua's hand.

She seemed to be reacting strongly to the phrase ‘recreate Explosion Magic’.

“The good thing about this is that anyone can use it and doesn't consume mana. However, it can't...”

“Fuaahhh!”

“Ahhh!? It took a lot of effort to make that, what are you doing!?”

Megumin ran to the window and threw it with all her might.

“How can I let something like this recreate the ultimate magic so easily! I won't accept the development of deviant weapons!”

“T-this girl is annoying...!”

Even though the agitated Megumin was breathing hard, she remembered something and looked at the letter she was reading just now.

That was the letter Darkness sent us.

Megumin read the letter for the umpteenth time, searching for some hidden message, and then put the letter down gently.

“Darkness is really going to leave the party huh...”

Aqua and I fell silent when we heard what she said.

“... It can't be helped. It's her family problem. It's already strange for her to adventure with commoners for so long.”

“But, but! This is really strange! Darkness actually left without saying anything! Our relationship isn't so superficial that a farewell letter would be adequate!”

Megumin rejected my comment.

"That's right. I think— the reason is, Kazuma going too far with his sexual harassment. Anyway, I don't think you should throw our laundry into the tub and yell 'yahoo~ underwear bath'."

"I didn't! I haven't done that yet!"

"Did you say 'yet'?"

I picked up the letter Megumin placed on the table and read it once more.

'I am deeply sorry for telling you this so suddenly,'

I read it again...

'I am in a complicated situation that I can't tell you about in detail. This is something I have to bear as a noble.'

I crushed the letter into a ball.

And threw it strongly into the trash bin.

'I can't meet all of you anymore. It is wilful of me, but I hope you can remove me from the party. Please find a replacement vanguard to take over for me.'

Seeing how I was acting, Aqua and Megumin seemed a little intimidated.

Damn it, why was I so angry?

'I am deeply grateful to all of you, and don't know how I can repay your kindness... I really enjoyed my time adventuring with everyone. Those were the happiest moments of my life so far. I will never forget my adventuring days with all of you.'

In the end, she was still an aristocratic lady living in a world that was different from ours .

She merely returned to the world she belonged to.

That's right. The problem would be solved if I could find a vanguard whose attack actually hits.

Sitting before the table, I started crafting the next product.

"Thank you for everything.

Best Regards,

Dustiness Ford Lalatina

The deepest gratitude to my beloved comrades—'

With a crack, the pen knife in my hand snapped.

I probably used too much strength unconsciously.

When she saw me like this, Megumin said:

“... Kazuma, you’re very concerned too right? Be more frank with yourself! Make a trip to Darkness’ home!”

She said that as she approached me with clenched fists.

That day when Darkness didn’t return.

A while after the date changed, we ate the cold dishes silently.

Filled with the passionate feelings of ‘don’t make us worry!', we rushed to Darkness’ home early in the morning—

“We will be stonewalled again. She is a grand noble after all. If we tried to break in, we will be arrested. Darkness and her father won’t go so far as to execute us, but we can’t do anything if she doesn’t want to see us.”

After hearing what I said, Megumin drooped her head depressedly.

We went to Darkness’ mansion, but the guards only said ‘no comment, please go back’ and chased us away.

I agitatedly look for a replacement for my snapped penknife...

"Kazuma, aren't you thinking about doing something for Darkness? Developing new products like this, did you buy into the advice given by that useless devil? Devils are just beings that insist on their twisted logic okay? They won't help others if there isn't something in it for themselves."

After my thoughts were pointed out, my movements dulled.

"I-I am not concerned about that! I just don't want to work seriously and earn more money easily!"

When Aqua heard that, she said with a serious face:

"Tsundere? Hey Kazuma, are you a tsundere? You are not being frank. Are you feeling lonely because Darkness isn't here? I only acknowledge blonde twintails to be tsunderes. If you understand, go dye and tie up your hair right now."

"....."

After I grabbed the egg from Aqua, she apologized in tears as she strongly resisted me who planned to make it into lunch.

Megumin muttered softly in a lonely tone:

"Even though these two are interacting as usual... It still feels like something is missing..."

Part 4

Megumin followed behind me sneakily as I went towards the guild.

To be honest, I was hoping she would stay at home together with Aqua who was incubating her egg.

“... Hey Megumin, I will give you some spare change, can you return to the mansion?”

“Don’t wanna. I am a member of the party too, I should have the rights to decide on the new member.”

Megumin had been refusing to listen since earlier.

It couldn’t be helped.

Right now, I was planning to head to the guild to find a vanguard to replace Darkness.

Megumin walked briskly to my back and said:

“It has only been a few days, and you are already abandoning the comrade who has been through thick and thin with us so easily. Kazuma is inhuman. Inhuman.”

After saying her piece, Megumin backed away and followed me a few steps behind.

“No, that’s wrong. It is Darkness’ wish for us to recruit a new member right? I think it would be best if Darkness returns. But she...”

When she heard that, Megumin rushed behind me again.

“You are just throwing a tantrum. Like Aqua said, you are just shy right? You don’t want to admit it and are putting on a strong front huh? You just don’t want others to know that the reason you have not taken in any new members is because you can’t put Darkness out of your mind right?”

Megumin pulled away briskly again after saying that.

A-Annoying...!

After that, Megumin followed me from a short distance all the way to the guild.

She could have walked beside me, but she chose not to do so.

Even so, she wasn't so far away that I could lose her by sprinting ahead.

After making it to the entrance of the Adventurers Guild, Megumin came to me and tugged on my shirt.

"Kazuma, I will advise you not to go in. If not, you will learn the terror of the Crimson Magic Clan."

"Give it a shot if you can. If you do anything unnecessary, I will use your precious staff to clear the toilet."

With Megumin who had a stiff expression in tow, I entered the guild.

Going to the notice board for recruitment of members, I browsed through the prospective candidates pasted on it.

I didn't need to put up a recruitment poster as our infamy was well known.

Even if I advertised for the recruitment of a vanguard, I knew very well that no one would come.

Hence, I needed to grab a guy looking for a party and force him into my team.

... I found a suitable candidate in no time.

A warrior, proficient in one handed sword.

Confident in his defence, wished to play the role of tank as a vanguard.

An eighteen year old guy.

... Sounds pretty good.

I tore that paper off and headed to the table that adventurer was sitting at.

"Erm... Excuse me, I am here because I saw this notice."

The man probably didn't know about us, and showed a cheerful face.

"Ah, yes! Nice to meet you, I am a warrior..."

"Wait, don't need to introduce yourself."

As we were having a man to man talk, we were interrupted by Megumin from behind.

... I have a bad feeling about this.

"Before that, I want to test to see if you are worthy enough to be in our party. After all, we are a first class team that fights on par with the bosses of the Demon King Army. The test content is to hunt a high bounty monster alone... Ouch!"

"There are no tests! Please ignore what she said!! Sorry, please wait a moment."

"Eh, alright..."

I hit Megumin who was spouting nonsense to shut her up.

"— Hey, come here. Come here right now."

"I refuse... Ahhh, don't pull on my hoodie, this cloak is an important gift from my friend, you are stretching it!"

I pulled Megumin to a place where the warrior guy won't be able to hear us.

"Don't you understand? We can just be a party of five when Darkness comes back right? I am not tough enough to be a tank. Same with Aqua, even more so for you. Since Darkness isn't here, we will need a tank to keep the monsters at bay, okay?"

"I got it, I got it Kazuma. I understand the importance of the vanguard role. Alright, let's start the interview."

This girl definitely didn't understand. I knew she would stir up some trouble.

"Listen up, it wouldn't be strange if we get targeted by the Demon King since we defeated a lot of bosses. Vanir was dispatched here because Beldia was defeated in this town. To be safe, we need to make the minimum preparations for battle. If it's

really too much for you, we can let that guy join as a temporary member. Got it? Don't mess things up okay?"

"I get it. I won't mess it up, I won't."

Unexpectedly, Megumin accepted it readily.

To put it simply, it was better to assume she would mess things up when she was so docile.

I kept an eye on Megumin as I went back to the table.

"Well... Sorry for the interruption. I am Satou Kazuma. Just call me Kazuma. And this is..."

I was planning to introduce her, but Megumin flicked her cloak and said in a voice loud enough to make everyone in the guild jump.

"I am Megumin! The top mage in Axel, the one who wields the magic of explosion! My nickname in this guild is the explosion girl with a screw loose! Come, let us... Ouch!!"

I knocked the head of Megumin who drew the attention of the entire guild by making a terrifying self introduction, but it was too late.

The face of that warrior guy was stiff beyond hope.

"E-erm... I heard the rumours, you are that... S-sorry, I thought the rumours were exaggerated at first but... I won't be able to keep up with your party, erm, please find someone else..."

What the hell was that rumour?

Our infamy might be worse than I imagined.

After seeing off the man who kept apologizing, Megumin smiled at me, her expression was a mixture of satisfaction and losing something important.

"Kazuma, he doesn't look good. I was just introducing myself and he got scared off. Next, let's find the next one."

What an evil suicidal attack, I underestimated Megumin's resolve.

She actually called herself a retard.

Even though she said to find the next one...

Even when Megumin and I went to the notice board and looked towards a suitable candidate, they would avert their eyes.

... The self introduction that echoed throughout the guild was a fatal hit.

Damn it, she usually cast her explosion without any thoughts, but she just had to be quick witted now.

At this moment.

"Hey Kazuma. What's up, looking for party members? You should have given me a holler."

The one who struck up a conversation with me when I was in a pinch was Dust. His party members didn't seem to be around today.

"Don't you have a party already? Where did they go?"

Dust frowned unhappily when he heard what I said.

"Listen to me Kazuma. Those guys are really too much, saying they earned a tidy sum in the fight against Hydra, and won't be coming to work any time soon! I didn't take the reward for subjugating the Hydra, so I have to earn my keep here. But most of the adventurers had money to spare, so I can't even find a temporary party. Warrior types are a dime a dozen... In summary, how about taking me in if you are looking for a vanguard?"

Megumin glared at Dust, as if she was cursing him for showing up at this juncture.

The quality of this delinquent was a bit lacking, but his capability was solid enough.

Megumin and Aqua teamed up with this guy once before, and I knew this guy rather well.

There was no reason to reject, so I tried forming a party with Dust.

— And so, we formed a temporary team to test out our compatibility, and took a random quest before heading to the farm in the outskirts.

It was raining season now.

When you talk about raining season, you would think of toads, but there were opponents that were much harder to handle.

“Snipe! Snipe snipe snipe! ... No good, my arrows are not dealing damage! These things are too tough!”

“Arrows and blades are meaningless against adaman snails! Kazuma, please hold them back with magic! I will protect the farmland from them before the Loli’s spell is ready!”

“Hey, who is this Loli you are referring to, make it clear!”

Dust, Megumin, and I joined a few other adventurers who took the same quest to exterminate the parasite beasts.

During raining season, a large number of giant snails known as adaman snails would show up to feed on the crops.

And now, behind us...

“Hey! Joseph got stabbed right in the butt by a summer bamboo shoot! It’s a serious wound, he won’t be able to do farm work anymore! Stretcher him out right now!”

“The wild boars are here! Wild boars and other pests are using the chaos as a chance to sneak in!”

The roars of the farmers harvesting the crops could be heard clearly.

No matter what world it was, farm work wasn’t easy.

“Freeze! Freeze! Freeze! Freeze!!”

I casted freeze on the adaman snail to lower its temperature, slowing their movement for a moment.

As expected of adaman snails, other than its shell, its other parts were really hard too.

I could only buy some time.

In the middle of the field, Dust who fended off a few monkeys stabbed his sword into the ground. Holding tightly onto the hilt of the sword, he held the shield before him with his left hand.

A large boar charged towards the field right at him.

Dust was going to block it straight on.

“Bring it on!”

Dust lowered his stance and put in more strength into the hilt.

If it was Darkness, she would definitely block it without even flinching.

After all, she even tanked the fierce attacks of the Hydra.

But it would be too brutal to ask that of Dust.

A boar the size of a bull charged at Dust...!

“Wahhh!?”

Dust was knocked into the sky by the boar.

However, the boar wasn't unscathed after colliding with Dust who was covered in steel armour. It staggered about and stopped its rampage.

I charged at the boar and slashed at it.

Unlike my usual tough battles, I took out the boar easily and watched how everyone else was doing.

Monkeys broke through the defence line of several adventurers and invaded the farm.

Ahh, damn it!

Ignoring Dust who was rolling on the ground after he was sent flying, I picked up my bow and sniped the monkeys.

“Kazuma! I finished chanting, explosion!”

Megumin informed me that her spell was ready. I pointed at the escaping monkeys and shouted:

“Do it! Megumin, blow them all away!”

One of the other adventurer seemed to have heard my instructions.

“Hey...! Wait...!”

“Explosion!”

Megumin’s explosion enveloped the monkeys, boars, adaman snails and blew them sky high along with the crops.

Part 5

We went back to the guild to report after exterminating the pests that were invading the farm.

The reward for each participating adventurer was twenty thousand Eris.

The enemies were adaman snails and wild beasts that didn't pose any danger to humans.

Leaving wild boars aside, that was the payout for subjugating monkeys and adaman snails that won't threaten the lives of humans.

Twenty thousand Eris was reasonable...

As for us—

“So, Satou Kazuma-san, Megumin-san and Dust-san will only get five thousand Eris...”

We blew up the crops, so the reward was docked greatly.

This was my fault for giving that reckless order to Megumin.

In response to my apology, Dust said:

“Hee, don't mind it, shit happens. I earned enough money for beer today. Don't let it get you down. After all, the monkeys would have escaped and the quest would have failed if not for the explosion!”

She just smiled and ordered an ice cold beer with the money.

“Erm, I think the three of us did great if we consider the fact that Aqua and Darkness weren't around. And there were too few adventurers for this. They should have recruited more people.”

Megumin said that too.

Megumin seemed happy about completing the quest, but her expression said otherwise.

... I know, it's because of Darkness.

It was cruel to compare him to Darkness, but we acknowledged the strength of our masochistic crusader, and couldn't help comparing others to her.

Dust killed quite a few monkeys and performed admirably as a vanguard... But if it was Darkness, even when her attacks wouldn't hit, she would not have budged when the boar charged at her. I kept thinking about such unnecessary things... No, it's useless to compare others to that girl now.

Let's keep Dust as a temporary member and see how things go.

— The next day after we decided on taking in a temporary member.

The door at the entrance opened without being knocked, and a man barged in.

“... I did mention about forming a temporary party and telling you to visit my place to introduce you to Aqua. But what are you panicking about?”

When he heard my query, Dust said while panting.

“Kazuma, this is bad! Help me out! Please, can you come with me!?”

It must be something important if the man who tried to killsteal the Hydra was acting so flusteredly.

I turned to the other two—

“I don't know the details, but I will be going out for now.”

Dust pulled me as we left the mansion.

— Dust walked in front of me and explained to me what was 'bad'.

I stopped in my tracks after hearing him out.

“... Eh, hold up. Is that what it is? The bad news is that Rin has found a man?”

“That's right! This is so important, but Tyler and Keith just brushed me off with a 'is that so?'”

No, that's all I would say too.

However, Dust raised his fist and said:

"My important comrade being intimate with some random guy! If a girl from your party hooked up with some strange guy, you would worry too right!?"

Eh, if a female friend I was close with found a boyfriend...

"I sort of get it."

"Right!? As expected of Kazuma, you really know me man!"

The hyped Dust seized the momentum and explained further to me.

According to him, Rin seemed to be drifting away from him.

Dust felt suspicious and followed Rin for an entire day until he saw her entering the room of an unknown man.

"... H-hey, you are st..."

"Which means! A wild guy appeared out of nowhere and conned Rin! I am worried about my comrade. I want to investigate that guy's background. Please Kazuma, the other two guys are not dependable! I'm begging you, help me out!"

Seeing Dust clapping his hands together as he pleaded with me, I thought it over.

It was not cool to interfere with someone else's love affair, but did I have the right to accuse others?

For example, if Darkness found a boyfriend suddenly, I would want to find out more about that guy too.

Also, It was a given that Darkness' taste in men was just too weird.

"... I understand. It is a little disgusting, but if I was in your shoes, I might have wanted investigate that guy too. I don't think Rin will have any problems, but I adventured with her for a while, so I am concerned about who that guy is too."

“Whoa! You have a way with words Kazuma, I am counting on you!”

I was a bit uneasy about Dust, but I was unconsciously projecting Darkness who I couldn't contact recently onto Rin, and followed him.

— Dust brought me to a small but nicely decorated hotel.

It was a hotel not too suitable for adventurers, but felt right for couples.

“This is the place, Kazuma. The scum conman is right here.”

We didn't know about that guy at all, right?

Seeing how mad Dust was, I started worrying about him going wild.

“And so, how are we going to do this? You're not going to directly go to that man's room right?”

Dust had a sinister smile when he heard my words.

“Just how long do you think I have been an adventurer for? If your preparations aren't thorough in our line of work, you won't live long. I already found out where he's staying, and rented the room next to it.”

Y-you really...

I was wondering if I should call the cops, but Dust had already opened the door to the hotel.

I reluctantly followed.

By the way, if he used his planning and execution capabilities, Dust would definitely accomplish something bigger.

The inside of the hotel was really plain.

The first floor was the dining hall, and the rooms were on the second floor.

Dust probably gave the staff a heads up since he didn't mind us when we entered, and merely yawned with an uncaring face.

Dust went straight up to the second floor and stopped before a certain room.

"Okay, this is it... The walls are thin, so keep it down. Rin should be in the room next door right now. She has good ears, and might notice our voices."

I nodded and entered the room with Dust.

It was a clean room with just a bed, table and small wardrobe.

Dust closed the door carefully and placed his ears onto the walls.

I thought it was wrong to do that, but I still leaned my ears against the wall.

And a familiar girl's voice came from the room on the other side—

『Even if you say that... It's hard for me to ask too...』

Without a doubt, that was Rin.

However, she didn't sound happy in this conversation.

『Rin-san, I know this is asking for a lot. But this is a taboo in the first place. But I just can't help falling in love!』

『C-calm down! Erm, have you thought it over? You are a noble, so you shouldn't be finding an adventurer as a partner. And the problem isn't just that...』

The man seemed to be a noble.

Firstly, Rin was being wooed.

But from her tone, she didn't seem to like it.

A noble and an adventurer.

People from two different worlds that shouldn't have the chance to cross paths their entire life.

Darkness and me adventuring in the same party was an exception.

When I was thinking about that, the conversation on the other side of the wall continued.

『Rin-san! I know very well that my feelings couldn't be conveyed because of the difference in status! No, I also know about the bigger obstacle before me. But, at least...! I want to take some photos with the magic camera that I bought after breaking the bank!』

『C-c-calm down! Please calm down! Just calm down alright!?』

I got the rough idea after hearing their conversation.

The noble youth fell for Rin, but they couldn't be together because of their difference in status.

Taking photos, that's all?

What, he didn't seem to be such a bad guy at all.

『If possible! Right, make it more lewd!』

『Calm down! I'm begging you, calm down! Let's go downstairs and eat something to ease the mood alright!!』

... No, that wasn't all.

Dust stood up quietly at this moment.

“I will beat him up right now.”

“Hey, wait, don't go! Now is not the time!”

After stopping Dust with some effort, the sound of the door opening and shutting came from next door.

The two of them probably went to the first floor for a meal.

Dust who heard that sound silently showed an evil smile.

Part 6

"Hey Kazuma, look at the clothes that are dumped around the place! As expected of a noble, these are all great stuff!"

I followed Dust and sneaked into the room next door.

I felt my head aching as I observed Dust who was ransacking the things in the room.

He finally committed a crime.

We were breaking and entering.

"Okay, let's see, what treasures does that young master has... Eh, this is!?"

Time to stop.

Breaking and entering, and now burglary... he crossed the line.

I put my hand on the shoulder of Dust who was stunned after seeing something in the closet...

"Look Kazuma, red lace lingerie ! That bastard, he wants to take pictures of Rin wearing this!? That pervert even prepared this! I will use it like this!!"

The raging Dust yelled and stripped without a moment of hesitation, and equipped the underwear with pink laces.

Without a doubt, this man was the pervert right now.

"Alright, Kazuma! Use that high quality magic camera to take my pictures! I want his expensive films to be filled with my naked pictures. Just in case gets a picture of Rin, I want to scar him for life at the very least!"

How should I respond?

Overwhelmed by his imposing manner, I picked up the magic camera as he ordered.

The design was simple, and I could feel powerful magic concentrated inside it.

Right now, I was doing the most retarded thing in the world with the magic item that cost as much as a house.

Dust with his arm crossed and clothes off, he arched his back and took the bridge posture without using his hands..

A pervert wearing red lace lingerie was supporting his trained body using his thick neck. His toned body drew a beautiful arch.

“Alright, do it Kazuma! Immortalize my beautiful body!”

— I didn’t know how many photos I took.

Dust made plenty of poses smiling with his teeth showing. As for me, I went from the top of tables to going prone onto the floor, taking pictures of him from all sorts of angles.

Pose of an eagle to that of a leopard.

For aesthetics, I made him take the pose of the thinker too.

“Well done Dust, that’s the way! You are sparkling right now!! We are done with glamorous poses, let’s move on to the lewd ones! First, bite your finger and point your ass this way!”

Dust did what I told him to do and bit his thumb melancholically as he directed his butt covered in a red underwear to the camera.

After a few shots, I gave further instructions.

“Okay, now for a more cool feeling! Spread your legs, lower your waist and put your hands... Right, that’s the feeling!”

Dust lowered his waist like a sumo wrestler, stretching his right arm to the front.

He had a serious expression on his face, as he repeated the lines I told him.

“Let’s get it on!”

<TL: Hakkeyoi, lines said at the beginning of sumo match>

At this moment, we hit our limit and rolled on the floor laughing our asses off with tears in our eyes...!

Donk.

Our eyes met Rin who was looking at us stupefied, her staff dropped onto the floor.

Part 7

“... So, what is this all about? I know Dust is a dumbass, but Kazuma too— What are you two doing?”

Dust and I kneeled before Rin and the noble youth.

“I am very sorry.” x2

We apologized at the same time.

What a blunder.

Spurred by a whim, the two of us lost ourselves in taking retarded photos.

Rin sighed from the very bottom of her heart.

And looked at Dust with stabbing eyes.

But Dust wearing that underwear was more of an eyesore, I wished that she at least made him wear some shorts.

“Sign... Really, there was no point in me worrying so much. Ahh, do what you want to him, I have nothing more to say... Kazuma, let’s go.”

Rin said with a tired expression and reached her hand towards me.

“... Hmm? No, letting these two be alone together is bad. It might lead to trouble.”

Rin pulled my hand and I was forcefully dragged out of the room.

“Whatever, I don’t want to care anymore.”

Rin said as she closed the door behind her.

『Dust-san, I didn’t imagine that you would be in my room in such an appearance...』

『Ah? So what if I committed breaking and entering, you got a problem with that?』

The voice of the duo could be heard inside.

Dust who didn't give a damn after he got caught sounded agitated.

And he didn't seem to understand how he was dressed right now.

"Hey Rin, shouldn't we stop him? He will definitely do something right?"

But Rin just shook her head in resignation, fatigue all over her face.

"I don't know if he will be the one doing, or be the one receiving... I did my best. Yup, I tried. Even though I did try, that dumbass was right in the room wearing that when I opened the door. That is like a duck holding some spring onions jumping into a pot and closing the lid. It's too late for me to do anything now."

...?

Our conversation didn't seem to be in the same course.

『O-Of course I won't mind, Dust-san! Dust-san...! Ahhh... Dust-san! Wahh, I am so very grateful! Even though Rin-san said that I should give up, but to think that... I was right to join the Axis cult and devote myself in prayer...! T-There really is a goddess...!』

『I don't know why you are so happy, but if you think everyone is afraid of the nobles, you are wrong. I am used to dealing with royalty and nobles. And it's just two men here right now, things like status doesn't matter. You get what I mean?』

『What!? You mean you don't care about our difference in status!? And you said that it is just two men in here...!? Ahhh... Ahhh...! Today is truly a great day, I am immensely grateful to you, Aqua-sama...!』

Rin and I left the hotel as we listened to Dust and the noble youth's conversation from behind the door.

"— Well then, what were the two of you doing in that place? Just what happened?"

Rin asked after leaving the hotel, and I wondered about how I should answer...

“Eh, actually...”

I recounted the brief details of the events and told her the most important point, which was Dust being worried about her... And that led to Rin holding her stomach in laughter.

“Ah, ahahaha...! T-too retarded! There is definitely something wrong with you two!
Ahahaha!”

She was right.

Or rather, my usual self wouldn't have pitched in. But in the end, I projected the image of Darkness onto Rin... Rin wiped the tears coming out from the corner of her eyes, and said with her shoulders still trembling.

“Sigh... Listen to me, the one the noble likes is Dust.”

I felt the time stopped when I heard that.

“... Eh?”

What did she just say?

“And so, that noble came to discuss with me about what he should do as he had fallen for Dust. He mentioned that he didn't harbour any hope of being together with Dust, but wanted to take some photos of him at the very least.”

... At this instant.

“Hyaaaaaa!”

A chilling scream came from the second floor of the hotel.

A cry I had never heard from Dust before.

... I was thinking about roping Dust in as a temporary member, but it would be better if we table this matter for the moment.

I hypnotized myself with ‘nothing happened today’ and walked alongside Rin.

I felt tired, I should go home and sleep.

Thinking over the plan for today tiredly, Rin suddenly said nonchalantly:

“By the way, that noble reminds me of the fact that Lalatina is a noble too. I only found out recently, what a surprise.”

“You found out? From who?”

I asked on reflex, and Rin looked at me strangely and replied:

“The news is all over the town now. Lalatina is the daughter of House Dustiness, and will be marrying Alderp, the Landlord of this town soon.”

.....

“Please tell me the details.”

CHAPTER 4

SPENDING ONE LAST NIGHT WITH THE YOUNG LADY!

Part 1

I announced in a loud voice before the two of them.

“In summary, we will now hold the battle conference on how to break through the heavily guarded mansion and meet Darkness. However, I already have the gist of the plan in mind!”

After returning home, I explained the situation to Megumin and Aqua.

I was discussing the battle conference together with them.

“Kazuma is really excited. So the marriage between Darkness and the landlord as fat as a pig is the talk of the town now? I know Darkness has bad taste in men, but this is atrocious. Normally, Darkness’ father would veto it. Did something happen...? I am pissed. At this happening right now, as well as the divination of that suspicious devil coming true...”

Aqua burrowed her brows, which was a rare sight, and said while cradling her egg on the couch.

That devil did predict that misfortune would befall Darkness’ House and her father.

Normally, people wouldn’t treat divination too seriously.

They would take it with a grain of salt at best.

However, magic and curses exist in this world.

“Kazuma, you really believe in the divination of that devil? You’re really doing what the devil told you, developing merchandise nonstop despite your immense wealth... He’s not as bad as Aqua, but devils won’t help others without something in it for them.

So advice is given on the basis that he'll reap some benefit from it. If we can return to the Home of the Crimson Magic, we can ask a great fortune telling Onee-san I know..."

Although Megumin said that...

To be honest, I didn't understand myself either.

I felt that the words of the devil couldn't be trusted so easily.

But...

"I don't think Vanir said that for fun, even though he didn't say it seriously. I don't know how helping Darkness will benefit him... In fact, I'm only working hard on developing my products just in case it will be of use for Darkness as foretold by the divination. Even if the divination fails, there is nothing bad about developing merchandise. My thoughts are that simple..."

The stupid Darkness who thought she could solve the problem by sacrificing herself and acted recklessly.

That was what Vanir divined for Darkness.

If it was the prophecy of some random fortune teller, I will have no problem laughing it off...

"No matter what, it's still too early to come to a conclusion. We only know the secondhand account that Rin heard from someone else. We won't know the situation unless we ask the person directly. The letter only told us that she wants to leave the party, so we can't find out more details. That landlord gave us plenty of problems too, so there is a need to force a meeting to make things clear, right? Am I right?"

Overwhelmed by my eagerness, Aqua and Megumin kept nodding their heads.

In fact, that retard did say something like 'As a prospective marriage partner, that noble's despicable and underhanded personality is just right.'

Something happened to her father, and there was also the possibility that Darkness was in agreement with the marriage—I didn't even want to consider that.

That girl would say brainless things sometimes too.

That's right, she even wanted to follow Beldia back then, and was really happy when Vanir possessed her.

On the way to the Home of the Crimson Magic, she was devastated when she heard the news of male Orcs going extinct.

Also, she left the party after leaving just a letter behind, and has always made me worried

Anyway, I had to confirm this matter after meeting her face to face.

And ask her what the meaning of this letter was.

Going to visit with just a letter wasn't appropriate, but since Rin told me that important titbit, I couldn't just leave it alone.

I sighed, it couldn't be helped.

And of course, I didn't have thoughts like 'taking revenge for making me worry', 'I haven't seen her for a long time, so infiltrating into Darkness' house is exciting' or 'I have a proper reason to see that woman now!'

Hehehe, just you wait, Darkness...

For some reason, Megumin smiled as I was thinking about various matters.

Aqua was looking at me as if she just saw something strange.

"Hey Kazuma, you looked so distracted recently, but seem really happy right now," she said a little happily.

Part 2

“Yup, about time to go. Aqua, I’m counting on you.”

It was about two a.m. right now.

We didn’t go for the heavily guarded front or rear gate of Darkness’ mansion, but the side that didn’t have an entrance.

An iron fence surrounded the mansion.

We hid in the darkness and peeked at the mansion through the gaps in the fence.

Following my request, Aqua started chanting softly.

It was several buff spells that enhance my physical abilities.

『Increase Strength』 and 『Improve Speed』

I didn’t know if it would be needed, but I got her to cast 『Enhance Defense』 and 『Enhance Magic Resistance』 too.

“『Versatile Entertainer』 !”

Aqua casted some spell I had never heard before.

From the faint light that appeared momentarily on my body, it should be a buff spell.

“What was that spell just now?”

“A spell that turns you into a super entertainer.”

I slapped her silently.

Ignoring Aqua who was trying to strangle me with tears in her eyes, I took out the tool that was really useful during the fight with the Mobile Fortress, the rope with a hook at the tip. It could be fired with an arrow.

I binded several layers of cloth onto the tip so it wouldn't make a din when it hit the roof.

"I will make a move first."

After discussing it with them, it was decided that I would sneak in alone. After all, I had several skills like hide and night vision, which were suitable for infiltration.

It might be the home of a noble, but it definitely wouldn't be harder than breaking into the royal castle.

I didn't plan to harm anyone, so aside from my bow and arrow, I didn't bring anything else along.

After shooting the arrow, I will hand the bow to Aqua so she could bring it home.

"Take care of yourself. It's fine if you knock her out and drag her back by force."

"... N-no matter what, you are still a woman of the cloth, is it fine to say that?"

"No, Aqua is right. She is stubborn, and wouldn't budge even if you tried to reason with her. It's fine to be a little rough with her, don't hold back!"

"Why are you all always so violent?"

Under their watchful eyes, I readied my bow and used 『Snipe』 to shoot the hook to the edge of the roof.

The hook latched onto the roof with a soft thud.

I observed the situation for the moment— No one seemed to notice and came out to check.

Tying the rope to the iron fence, I whispered to the two of them:

"After I get onto the roof, untie the rope from the fence. There might be patrols, so they will know I have infiltrated if they find the ropes. I will think of a way to get out, so go back to the mansion and wait for now."

I tugged on the rope to make sure it was taut. The two of them nodded at me.

Alright, time to do this!

Paying homage to army rangers, I got onto the rope and scaled it.

With my poor physical ability, I could never have done that without the magic buff.

After reaching the roof successfully, I signalled to Aqua.

Upon confirming that Aqua had untied the rope below, I used my sensing skill to detect the presence of people nearby.

Being able to confirm the presence of someone inside a building without needing to go inside made this very useful.

Finally, I found a room that was empty.

I wanted to use the rope tied to the building to break into that room on the second floor directly, but it was locked.

Now was the time for modern technology to debut.

“Tinder.”

With one hand on the rope, I put my other hand near the glass window and heated it up.

With nothing to burn, the fire died out after exhausting the mana put into it. I repeated it several times.

After the surface of the glass got heated...

“『Freeze』.”

With a soft chant, the glass was frozen instantly and made a soft cracking sound.

I was on alert for a moment, but no one came to investigate the noise.

This was a way to break glass by using thermal shock, normally done with a lighter and water.

When I was inflicted with Chunnibyou, I learnt this when I searched for dangerous knowledge that I didn't plan on ever using.

I thought it would be useless when I learned about this, but to think it could be put to use now... Pressing the cracks in the glass, I peeled off the pieces near the locks piece by piece.

After the hole was big enough for my hand to reach the lock, I opened the window and sneaked in.

This was the moment I changed from an adventurer to a thief.

Yup, the infiltration was proceeding smoothly, the next problem would be finding Darkness' room.

Do I need to sneak across the corridor and check every room?

No, if there was someone on patrol, I would be found out even if I used 『Hide』 .

At that moment...

“Did you really hear something?”

“Eh, I hope it was just my imagination...”

From inside the room, I heard this voice from one end of the corridor.

I covered the broken window with the curtain hurriedly, and cleaned up the broken glass shards scattered on the floor.

With the creak of the door unlocking, I slid under the bed in the nick of time and activated 『Hide』 .

When the door opened, I heard a resigned voice.

“See, it's nothing. Norris, it's about time you change your cowardly personality. Let's go to the kitchen and ask for some supper to eat.”

“S-sorry... I thought I heard something breaking...”

I didn't move as I listen to the door closing and the footsteps fading into the distance.

Since they were talking about supper in the kitchen, they were definitely the patrol guards in the mansion.

In that case, checking the rooms one at a time... Well then, let's go to the kitchen they mentioned, the young lady wanted supper, then follow the servant sending supper to Darkness' room... That was too unrealistic.

First of all, I couldn't let them see my face, and I didn't have the talent to imitate the voices of the two patrolmen.

I just felt that if the multi-talented Aqua was here, she would be able to imitate the voices without a problem.

... Multi-talented?

I suddenly remembered something and coughed dryly— One of the patrolmen was called Norris right?

“... This is Norris here... Huh...!?”

I was surprised by how good my imitation of his voice was.

What was happening, this was really nerve wracking!

I just remembered about the super entertainer spell Aqua casted on me, and tried it without expecting anything...!

“T-this is really amazing... Ah~ ah~ Darkness, oh, it's Darkness...! This is without a doubt the voice of Darkness!”

I tried mimicking Darkness' voice and it was indistinguishable from the real thing.

It would work, this skill would work!

I needed to thank Aqua after returning to the mansion.

.....

“You’re wonderful Kazuma-sama, do me!”

I played around with the voice of Darkness and some other people, and suddenly came to my sense.

No good, now wasn’t the time to play by myself, I almost lost track of my goal.

I had never thirsted for a tape recorder so much before, but I should complete the mission of meeting Darkness.

Anyway, time to visit the kitchen.

After making up my mind, I activated 『Hide』 and was planning to leave the room quietly—

I followed the patrolmen who led me to the kitchen. When I was certain they had left, I leaned towards the door.

Coughing once, I thought back on how Norris sounded.

Pretending to knock the door frantically, I said in a hurried tone:

“Sorry, this is Norris! I forgot to mention that the young lady wanted supper! I still have to do my rounds, could you please send the supper to the young lady’s quarters!?”

I apologized to Norris-san who I have never met before in my heart.

“Really, why are you so eccentric, Chuck? You are usually meticulous about things, but you always forget about the important stuff... Understood, we will send it over, work hard on your duties.”

I heard a reply along with wry laughter.

I said in a panicky voice—

“Thank you very much!”

And with that, I pretended to run off.

I then hid at a corner and waited quietly for the chef to come out.

Sometime later, there was finally some movement from the kitchen—

Part 3

“Young lady, I am here to bring you supper.”

After the chef said that, he knocked the door.

I peeked at him from the dark.

Good, good, I found Darkness' room.

After the chef knocked a few times, the door finally opened.

Wearing a silk negligee and with her hair a mess, Darkness rubbed her tired eyes and appeared. She seemed to have been sleeping.

The chef averted her face and said:

“Erm, Norris said that the young lady wanted supper...”

“...? I don't remember saying that.”

The chef was confused, but lowered his head immediately and apologized to the sleepy Darkness.

“...!? I-I'm very sorry for disturbing you so late into the night!”

Darkness seemed baffled as she watched the chef ran off in a panic, and closed the door.

Some time passed by after the chef who didn't understand what just happened passed my hiding place.

Using this chance when no one was around, I knocked Darkness' door—

“Young lady, please wake up. A man named Satou Kazuma suddenly came here in the middle of the night, saying he wants to meet the young lady no matter what...!”

I used the voice of the patrol guard Norris and spoke to the person inside the room.

After a while, a reply came from inside...

"... Those claiming to be Kazuma, Aqua and Megumin are to be ignored— I already said that. Really, that guy actually came at such an hour... He, really is—!"

A gentle voice that was a mix of pain and happiness came from within.

"But young lady, that Kazuma man says... if he is ignored, he will spill the dark history of Lady Lalatina to the people in the guild..."

When she heard that, Darkness laughed:

"Fu fu, that guy is the same as usual... Tell Kazuma to do as he wishes. Anyways, I can't go to the adventurers guild any longer..."

Darkness said a little sadly.

.....

"But young lady, that man is telling very unsavory things to the servants at the main gate. He said the young lady's abs are getting more and more defined, and the young lady is very concerned. He asked us to control the amount of protein in her meals..."

A clank came from inside the room.

"He also said that the young lady once giggled happily when she posed with a cute one piece dress, and that we should prepare more of such clothings..."

Another slam came from the room. It sounded like something dropping.

Darkness then said with a quivering voice:

"T-these, these, these are... all lies! Lies! Don't be fooled!"

.....

"Eh, he mentioned something more incredible— may I repeat it to you?"

"... S-say it."

I took a deep breath.

"He said the young lady accumulates lust within his matured body over time, even though you are a virgin, but every night—"

With tears in her eyes and her cheeks flushed, Darkness opened the door violently and rushed out.

And locked eyes with me.

"!!?????!!??!??!"

Darkness' mouth open and shut as she panted, and couldn't say anything. Her eyes were wide open.

I broke in!

Part 4

I covered her mouth with my hand and pushed her into the room.

She had yet to recover from her shock and panic, but she still grabbed my right arm with her hands, and tried to push me away. However...!

“With the buff of Aqua’s support spells, I won’t lose so easily!”

After whispering that into her ear, I closed and lock the door with my other hand.

Darkness shivered for some unknown reason when she heard the click of the door being locked.

To prevent Darkness from making any sound, I covered her mouth with my right hand and grabbed her right wrist with my other hand. I checked the situation inside the room swiftly.

The light wasn’t on, she was definitely asleep earlier.

Only the sparse starlight lit her face and mine.

I wanted to talk after suppressing her, but didn’t want to throw her onto the floor directly... At this moment, I noticed a large bed behind her.

I put my strength into the arm that was being grabbed by her hands, and lifted her up.

“!?”

Darkness probably never expected that the weak me could lift her up with one arm.

Maybe Aqua’s wish to bring Darkness back was really strong, her support magic was very effective today.

After lifting Darkness up, I used the momentum to push her down to the bed.

With a gentle pomf, Darkness’ body sunk into the bed.

I placed my body between Darkness' legs to prevent her from kicking me, and held her down steadily.

Good, now we could talk without any interruptions. Right...?

... Darkness released her hold onto my arm and laid weakly onto the bed.

Blinking the tears in her eyes away, her face was beet red.

I could see her blushing face under the faint starlight.

Because I was covering her mouth with my hand, I could feel her fast breathing coming through my fingers... Hmm!?

Wasn't this situation really bad!?

Hey, resist a little, it would be hard for me to go on if you give in like this!

With the full support of Aqua's buffing spells, I don't think I would lose to Darkness in strength.

However, there were all sorts of problems if she was defenceless like this, as if she had given up...!

I whispered in the dim room:

"Hey, hey Darkness, don't misunderstand! The situation is weird now, but I don't mean it that way. I just came to talk to you, don't misunderstand this as a night raid... Ah, hey! Don't close your eyes as if you are resigned to your fate! Stop! The atmosphere will become weirder! Stop, this is bad, bad in all sorts of ways!"

As for what was bad, that would be me of course.

Even if I told them I was just wanted to talk to Darkness, and went with the flow because Darkness looked very lewd and I went for it, I would definitely be hit by their combo of 『Explosion』 and 『Resurrection』 until their anger was appeased.

With my hand on Darkness' mouth, I started trembling.

"Hey, hey listen to me! I sneaked in here to ask you what happened! Look, don't scream when I remove my hands alright!? I am here to talk to you!"

Darkness opened her eyes a little and nodded.

Alright...

I was more nervous than all the battles I experienced.

"I'm letting go now, don't scream alright?"

After seeing Darkness nod, I let go of her, and got in position to cover her mouth again if she screams.

Darkness averted her face a little shyly.

"Erm... Kazuma, can you lie beside me when we talk. If you ride on top of me and stick so close, it's a bit..."

I turned my face in the opposite direction from Darkness.

"Oh, yeah, right. E-Excuse me, I didn't mean to ride you! ... And you too, why did you write such a letter..."

When I let down my guard and wanted to continue the conversation.

"Thief...! I am about to be violated... Ugh...!"

Damn, this bitch was trying to pull a fast one!

I was careless!

It was too late when I covered Darkness' mouth again. Sounds of footsteps came from the corridor.

Someone was heading this way.

Oh no, what should I do!?

Darkness whose mouth was covered while being pressed down by me had a triumphant and provocative look.

She must be grinning in her heart.

Damn wench!

"Is something the matter, young lady!? Pardon me, I am opening the door now!"

After saying that, the lock creaked open...!

Shit, Darkness' cocky victorious expression made me want to beat her up.

But, don't think I'm done here...!

"Don't open the door! My appearance is indecent right now! Sorry, I was too excited with my intense play just now, and yelled by accident!"

Darkness opened her eyes wide when she heard me.

That's right, I was speaking in Darkness' voice.

"Is that so... However, this humble one has yet to confirm the young lady's safety... And playing games in the middle of the night is a little..."

The servants were doubting me.

That was natural, Darkness might be saying that because an intruder was threatening her.

"Intense play means the type of games that adults play alone, don't make it say it, it's embarrassing."

"Young lady...!?"

Baffled voices came from outside the room.

At the same time, Darkness held onto my right wrist with both hands.

“What, you might be saying that you want to confirm my safety, but in actual fact, you just want to see my indecent appearance right, you pervert ahhh!”

Darkness glared at me fiercely with tears in her eyes. She strengthened her grip, as if she wanted to break my right arm.

When they heard me scream from the pain, the people outside panicked.

“What, what is the matter!?”

I endured the pain from my right arm being twisted and said:

“N-Nothing! I just forgot to turn the indecent magic toy off ahhhhh! Ahhh, it, it’s breaking! I am turning strange! I can’t hold it in anymore! I am really going to break!”

“P-Pardon me! I-I will leave at once!!”

The sound of footsteps running away could be heard.

There seemed to be a lot of people who came after hearing the commotion. But they had scattered after hearing what happened.

Enduring the pain in my arm, I smiled deviously at the tearing Darkness who was trembling all over.

Part 5

Darkness poked at my hand that was covering her mouth.

She was probably signalling that she wouldn't scream anymore.

I let my hand go and Darkness sighed.

I looked at my hand that was grabbed by Darkness, and a dark purple hand shaped mark appeared on it.

If Aqua didn't buff my defence with magic, it would probably be broken.

Darkness said with resignation:

"... Seriously, you actually went that far. The servants are going to address me as the perverted young lady in secret now... Ughhh...!?"

Darkness suddenly quivered.

"You must be thinking 'that isn't too bad'."

"No I didn't."

"Yes you did."

Even in such a situation, this fellow was still...

"Hey, what in the world happened? Why did you leave the party, the rest are worried about you too. At least explain the situation, we are..."

Comrades right?— Before I even said that, I felt embarrassed for saying such a line.

"Some things can't be said because you all are my important companions... Well, it's nothing serious, just some problems in my home. Actually, my House owed money to that landlord, and father said he will pay it back by instalments... But my father's health is ailing recently and that landlord came to rush for the payment, making things difficult and questioning if my father can repay the debt within his lifetime... I heard that the debt would be forgiven if I marry him. It's that simple."

What the hell.

"Your House owed that much money? Isn't your dad a grand noble in this nation, wouldn't the king help him out? And this..."

I stopped mid way.

This seemed like...

"That's right, it's coercion through loaning us money... However, this is the norm for nobles. A daughter from a noble family marrying another noble— that's all it is."

Darkness said easily as if she wasn't involved.

She continued after seeing my face.

"Don't make such an expression, Kazuma. You know my taste in men right? That landlord seemed really eager to make me his. That lusty pig like landlord won't even wait for the wedding night before rushing into my room and push me down. Hehe, he will probably ravage me for days and nights without anything to eat or drink, how exhilarating...!"

She laughed casually after saying all these jokingly, as if she was trying to hide something.

... If that was so, why do you look so sad?

"That's why you wanted to defeat the Hydra with just the few of us... Erm, sorry for getting so many people to join in, the path to hell is paved with good intentions... How much did you owe, I will pay for it—"

"Don't put it that way, Kazuma. I am a noble. My duty is to protect the people. Rather than using the hard earned money of the citizens to pay my debt, I would rather sell my body... And your assets won't be enough to clear the debt."

She cut me off and looked at me straight in the eye.

At this moment, I finally had the chance to look at Darkness properly under the starlit sky.

Her pure and strong eyes stared right at me.

Her hair spewed on the bed like golden threats, reflecting the starlight faintly.

She struggled with her mouth covered moments ago, so she was still panting with sweat on her cheeks.

With each deep breath, her chest covered by her thin negligee undulated, giving off a strong sense of presence.

And when she struggled with me earlier, Darkness' negligee had slid off her shoulders and flipped up her skirt. Darkness whose whole body was emitting heat turned a light shade of red—



I started chanting spells that could clear my head.

『Old lady who is lying half naked in the living room...』

『The panties of the grandma filled with unknown expectations...』

『Dust's butt inside a red lace underwear—!』

『May my heart be as still as water!!』

The spell worked and my heart was absolutely serene.

Good, no problem, I could definitely tide over this.

Darkness who was looking straight at me from below smiled gently, and said to me after I regained my composure.

“... Instead of giving my precious virginity to the landlord... Hey, Kazuma, how about becoming adults together...?”

The spell I casted was suddenly ineffective.

Calm down Satou Kazuma, think it through.

Darkness only said that because her mind was set on marrying.

She had given up, and thought she won't meet us ever again.

But how could I let this happen!?

That's right, I won't give Darkness to that fellow so easily, and I will definitely stop this.

In that case, it would be awkward if we did it here.

Becoming lovers with Darkness?

Wrong! Satou Kazuma, why did you come here in the first place!?

While I was trying to convince myself, Darkness gripped my right hand gently.

And pulled it towards her body...!

She probably didn't have the courage to let me caress her breasts right away, so Darkness simply grabbed my hand, not knowing where to place it.

Seeing her uneasy expression, I considered it for two seconds...!

Screw the consequences and enjoy the moment.

I place my right hand that was grabbed and placed it on her abdomen.

Darkness shivered intensely.

And gently closed her eyes.

I thought about saying something romantic as I caressed Darkness' white skin on her stomach...

"... Your abs are getting really defined."

Part 6

Under the shine of the only light source, which was the starlight, Darkness and I faced off against each other in the middle of the room.

Before me was Darkness who lost all her earlier lewdness, her fists tightly clenched with bloodshot eyes, ready to attack.

“I was wrong! I admit I was wrong okay!? It was a slip of the tongue! Sorry, I couldn’t help it!”

“There are times when I blow my top too! Damn it, how dare you toy with a woman who is offering her body, you will pay for this! I will cut you into pieces!”

“Young lady, please don’t use crude terms like ‘cut you into pieces’! ...What, so you like me, is that it? Then just say it straight!”

“Who would like a dumbass like you! I am raging so hard right now! And don’t call me young lady!”

Darkness yelled as she pounced at me.

With my speed enhanced by buff spells, I dodged easily.

The sound of footsteps came from the corridor once again, someone was charging this way.

“Hehe, what now, Kazuma? My servants are here! You are done for if they find you. You broke into the bedroom of a young lady, you will lose your head without my help! If you prostrate before me now, I might just forgive you!”

She probably became madder because of my nimble dodging, which made Darkness look more furious than ever.

In the end, a whole crowd of people gathered outside and the door was banged heavily.

“Young lady! We are opening the door now, young lady!”

When she heard their voice, Darkness opened her arms wide and jumped in an attempt to catch me.

I could dodge this easily under normal conditions, and now that I have Aqua's buffing spell, it was a walk in the park.

I suffered a lot of hardships to get here, not to mention how worried I was all this while.

How could I back down now?

"Bring it on! Erosader whose only strong points are your erotic body, stamina and arm strength! It is time to see you cry a river after losing to the weakest job! Have a taste of the real power I showed in the capital!"

I answered using Darkness' voice and took on Darkness who pounced on me, pushing against each other with our hands.

"D-don't mimic my voice!"

"Y-young lady!? What are you playing at!?"

Confused voice came from behind the door.

They must be baffled since Darkness and I spoke with the same voice.

The door then opened with a creak.

I turned my face towards the door...!

"Don't open the door~ Lalatina is naked right now! I will be seen~!"

"Huh!? P-pardon me...!"

My voice acting made the door opening sound stop.

Using this chance, I used Drain Touch to siphon Darkness' stamina.

But Darkness' stamina was on a totally different level from the capital's knights, and was unmoved by Drain Touch.

Grabbing onto me forcefully, Darkness said with a blushing face:

“Don’t say that with my voice! Hey, come in quick! It’s an intruder who can mimic my voice with magic!”

“Ah, okay, right away!”

The sound of the lock opening started again.

Damn it!

“Hahahaha! It’s my win, Kazuma! After so many battles with you, I am satisfied that we can finally resolve this!”

Darkness said cockily as she endured my Drain Touch.

She even said ‘final’, how can I lose now!?

I relaxed my strength, and Darkness who was leaning forward while saying her victorious lines lost her balance.

Using this chance, I pulled my left hand from her and put it on Darkness’ back.

I shout with my original voice:

“Freeze!!”

“Ahhh!”

Darkness yelped when the ice attack hit her back, and shivered.

When Darkness fell onto her knees with her face flushed and body quivering, I pulled my right hand out.

“Young lady!”

I faced the door that opened with a bang and raised my right hand.

“Create Earth!”

This was the ever effective beginner spell that blinds people.

When she saw the dirt on my hand, Darkness realized my intentions and warned...

“Everyone, cover your...!”

Eyes— Before she could finish—

“Wind Breath!”

I casted my spell—!

Part 7

I am Kazuma.

An adventurer from Japan.

My dream was to live a carefree and willful life without any want for money.

With such a simple dream and living a simple life, I—

“Found him yet!? He’s not in the shadows here! That guy has the 『Hide』 skill, don’t overlook places that seem empty either! Don’t let him escape! With the name of House Dustiness on the line, I want that fellow captured and brought before me!”

“Yes, young lady!” x3

I am thinking about how to hide from the pursuit of the furious Darkness.

“Kazuma! Where are you!? If you come out now, I will forgive you after punching you at full force ten times! But if you get caught by me, I won’t let you off so simply!”

The raging Darkness roared behind my hiding place.

While listening to the cries, I crouched and sneaked through the corridor.

Darkness was completely lost in her fury right now.

I won’t be able to talk to her like this, so I will withdraw for now.

Or rather, I might really be murdered by Darkness if she catches me. She knew Aqua could cast 『Resurrection』 after all.

In order to escape from the mansion, I tried breaking into a room nearby.

Luckily, the door wasn’t locked.

Alright, I just need to get out through the window.

I approached the window while thinking that...

I suddenly heard a faint voice from the middle of the room, where the bed was.

"... Is someone... there...?"

It was Darkness' dad.

Even though the room was dark, his thin and pale face was obvious to me.

"Ahhh, it's you... What are you doing here in the middle of the night...I see, my daughter has a bunch of good comrades..."

Darkness' dad said with a weak smile.

He seemed to have guessed my goal after seeing me here at this hour.

As expected of the noble known as the treasure sword of the kingdom.

However, he didn't have the same vigour as the first time I met him.

The father that was so energetic then was now smiling so weakly.

Just what kind of illness could ravage a man in such a short time?

The sound of people running echoed from the corridor.

"Old man, sorry for visiting you when you are not feeling well, but your daughter is raging in the house right now. Can you calm her down?"

When he heard that, the uncle smiled happily in his blanket.

"Is that so. My daughter that was so depressed recently actually got that angry."

Old man, this was no laughing matter.

... Oh right.

"Old man, I heard you owe that landlord old man some money, but I don't think someone like you would borrow from him. Also, this doesn't look like a House that is troubled over money. Why are you troubled over debts then...?"

I expressed my doubts.

It wasn't appropriate to ask this with him being ill, but Darkness wouldn't tell me the details, so this was the only way.

"... Yes, Kazuma-kun, you are really bright. I will leave my daughter to you. Sorry, but can you elope with her...?"

What was this person trying to say?

I was asking about the debts, so why did he talk about eloping?

"No, I refuse, no freaking way. Also, your daughter is chasing me all the house, out for my blood right now. Allow me to be frank, your daughter is really refined."

"Haha, you are right, she is a virtuous and gentle girl. Pure, shy, and hates to trouble others."

I wanted to retort 'who the hell is that!', but decided to hold my peace.

He accepted my sarcasm straight and started praising his daughter.

I don't know what disease it was, but it probably got into his brain.

Uncle might be feeling weak, but he still looked at me straight with unwavering eyes.

"Please don't mind the details. My daughter only owed money because of her own actions... Don't worry, once you elope with my daughter, I can sell the house. I will get a large sum then. I am thinking of some other way to wipe away the debt too."

Wipe away the debt... in other words, an unjustifiable debt?

Anyways, this competent father would definitely think of some way.

"However, my daughter wanted to settle the problem through marriage. I am willing to give anything to stop her... Kazuma-kun. From the eyes of this father, my daughter really likes you. I might be shamelessly promoting her but— she is really a good woman... How about it, would you take her hand...?"

"You ask me how about it...? Your daughter just said she wanted to turn me into mince meat..."

On top of that, the important thing was...

"That's right, old man, just where does it hurts? I have a good... Eh, an arch priest that is only good in magic in my team, she could even use resurrection. I don't know where it hurts for you, but if I bring her here, there should be a way to help."

In an exceptional case like this, that useless bum would be of help.

But he merely smiled when he heard me.

"... No, it's futile. Healing magic can't heal me either. And resurrection won't work if I die from sickness. That would be a way for life to end naturally. Those who die a natural death can't be waken from the miracle of the gods. No matter the cause of death, those whose time has come should return to the heavens, which is something we should be happy for... So, don't make such a sad face."

It seemed my expression was shown on my face without me realizing it.

"Can you let the arch priest in my party to diagnose your illness? For uncle to fall sick at such a time is a bit..."

"Like I have been poisoned by the landlord, right?"

Uncle said what I was thinking out loud.

... That's right.

From how obsessed that landlord was over Darkness, he probably would do anything to get his hands on her.

However...

"I already investigated. No, this is the first possibility I checked. But I wasn't poisoned."

That's true, Darkness' dad was a competent noble.

He was definitely more thorough in his investigation than me.

"Haven't found him!? Still haven't found him yet!? Come out Kazuma! And explain to the househelp how you mimicked my voice, and undo the misunderstanding!"

Darkness' voice came from the corridor.

Uncle smiled wryly.

"Hey... I leave my daughter to you."

T-this was bad...

"Can't you discuss this with the king or someone about this? Uncle is a grand noble in this kingdom right? If the debts were forced onto you by the landlord through unscrupulous means..."

Closing his eyes, he shook his head slowly.

"Even if I did so, my daughter will still marry. She is really stubborn, I wonder who she learned that from. Even if I asked the king for help, she would say 'don't use the tax money of the people on something like this' and sacrifice herself... Sigh, why is my daughter so witless."

That's right.

Absolutely right.

As her father, you should do something about your daughter's stubbornness... At that moment, the door opened with a bang.

Outside the room. the panting Darkness stared at me with wrath in her eyes.

"Hehehe... So you are here, Kazuma, hahaha! Let's see how you will..."

"Hey, there is a sick person here, don't make a din opening the door. Calm down, I only came as a representative for everyone who is worried about you...!"

The angry Darkness ignored my explanation.

“Shut up! To think you can shatter the reputation of the target you are worried about in such a short time...! This is a matter between nobles, a commoner like you shouldn’t interfere, going back to the mansion and farming some strange crops should be enough for you!”

This woman!

“Forget about the debt! Let’s run away together! And start over in a new place! You should know that if I return empty handed, those two will—! Especially Megumin, she will do something reckless! Like blowing away the venue of your wedding or something!”

“Do it if you’ve got the guts! I will definitely have you arrested as the mastermind! If you don’t want to go to jail, rein them in! I won’t run! Even if I do, someone else would be implicated! ... And first of all...”

Darkness charged me as she said that.

So she wanted to conclude the last match before her marriage?

Oh no, I will die!

I turned and sprint for the window.

“You witless stubborn woman! Enough, do what you want! I won’t care no matter how much you cry after this!”

After spitting out this line, I flew towards the window with a flying kick...!

“If you want my help, you can apologize to me anytime! Say ‘I am sorry for making everyone worry, I need Kazuma-sama’s help’... Uwah!”

The glass on the window was harder than I imagined. I didn’t break the glass with my kick, and my entire body crashed into the window.

Instead of a kick, the window was smashed open with my body slam, and I fell out of the window with the shattered windows onto the ground.

Even though it was just the second floor, without anything to break my fall, I rolled on the ground in pain.

Darkness came to the window and looked down at me—

“A-Are you alright, Kazuma-sama!? If you say ‘Sorry Darkness-sama, please save me’, I wouldn’t mind helping you with first aid!”

Her shoulders were shaking as she said while holding back her laughter.

Pushing my painstruck body, I climbed over the iron fence to flee from the guards that came running because of the noise...!

“D-damn it... Darkness! I will not help you even if you come to me crying! — Don’t fucking come here! 『Create Water』 ! 『Freeze』 !”

After cursing out at Darkness who was watching me excitedly, I casted my spells on the guard chasing me and escaped back to the mansion.

Part 8

“Uguuuu...! Aqua! Aqua!! Heal me! Heal me quick!!”

After making it home, I walked towards Aqua who was dozing off on the couch in the living room, with an egg in her arms.

Darkness probably thought it would be awkward to meet Aqua and Megumin, so she didn't pursue me.

“... Hmm? ... Hey, what happened to you Kazuma, you are wounded all over! Did you see Darkness? Why are you hurt so badly? Did you say something dumb again?”

Aqua asked nonstop as she healed me with her spell.

And why did you seem so happy to see me wounded all over?

Hearing our commotion, Megumin who was sleeping on the same couch woke.

“Kazuma, you are finally back. What happened? Did you shoot your mouth off again? Did you convince Darkness?”

Now I know how these two sees me.

Despite Aqua healing my wounds, I still felt upset.

Unable to expel that feeling in my heart, I headed to my room on the second floor alone.

“Don't interfere with that girl anymore! Leave her be! Unless she comes crying for help, leave her alone! I don't want to suffer anymore, so take care of the rest!”

Aqua and Megumin looked at each other when I showed my attitude of resignation.

“Eh... Darkness even promised to build a small pet house after this child hatches...”

Aqua lowered her gaze disappointedly with the egg in her arms.

As for Megumin—

“Kazuma, I don’t know what happened, but now is not the time to throw tantrums! And why must Darkness marry anyway!?”

She asked while facing my back that was walking up the stairs.

I stopped.

“She owed money! Her family owed a big sum of money to the landlord! I heard the debt will be forgiven if she marries the landlord!”

“Ugh... Debt huh. I don’t know how much she borrowed, but I just sent money back home and don’t have much on me...”

Megumin said as she flipped through her purse that was full of shopping point cards and coupons, and sighed.

“It can’t be helped, if she really needs money, I will break my tiger shaped piggy bank then.”

Aqua proposed a useless idea with an egg in her arms.

The sum was unknown, but it was big enough that a grand noble like Darkness had to sell herself off.

Megumin and Aqua’s spare change would just be a drop in the ocean.

With my back towards them, I headed to my room.

“She already made up her mind! Just let her be! Unless she comes to me crying and apologize, I will not do anything about it!”

Megumin shouted at me.

“Kazuma, is this the time to vent your anger!? Darkness is going to be married off! Are you fine with that!?”

Tell that to that stubborn girl instead!

CHAPTER 5

GIFTING THIS BRIDE WITH BLESSING!

Part 1

The town was buzzing these past few days.

The landlord who was infamous for being a miser seemed to have spent a lot of money to announce his wedding, building a festive mood.

He seemed to be sealing the all the retreat routes so Darkness couldn't change her mind.

The date of the wedding was set and announced.

The landlord probably couldn't wait, setting the date of the ceremony one week later without any regards for anything else.

He must be anxiously waiting for his wedding day with Darkness to come.

"Kazuma. I already asked plenty of times, but is this okay? Really okay? Really really okay?"

Megumin pressed me as I kept making all sorts of prototypes.

I mixed the sap of a plant named tar plant together with the digestive fluid of slimes, working hard on developing a new product.

By combining the two, I could create a half dried vinyl material,

I worked nonstop.

"I've already said many times, I can't do anything if she's so stubborn about it. There's still a week left, if she comes to me crying, I'll think of something. If not, I won't worry about it."

After saying that, I blew air into the small vinyl droplet.

The process wasn't easy.

Surely, there may be another method to mass-produce this more easily, but since now I'm in the stage of making a trial product I'll just bear with it.

Aqua who was sitting at the side didn't pay any attention to Megumin and me bantering, singing her song as she cradled her egg on the couch.

It was annoying, but letting her be was better than her interfering with my prototypes.

But for some reason, I was a bit mad that her singing was quite good.

... Megumin picked up the prototype I was making.

"Stop fooling you should think about it more seriously! I won't acknowledge this! If you are just going to sit idly by, I have my own plans too!"

Megumin then gripped the prototype she took from me tightly.

"Hey, don't cause any trouble alright? If you go too far with your stupid plans, it will trouble Darkness. Darkness asked me to rein you and Aqua in... Alright, give that back. I've spent a lot of time since this morning to make it."

Coaxing the angry Megumin, I reached out my hand, prompting her to return that thing to me.

"... What is this?"

Megumin fiddled with that thing as she observed it.

"I'm creating something known as bubble wrap from my country. It feels different because of the material and the way it is made, I still think it is workable."

Megumin listened to my explanation carefully.

"... What is it used for?"

She asked moodily.

"It is meant to be popped. By popping it one at a time, your heart will become peaceful."

"... That's it?"

"That's it."

.....

Megumin squeezed the bubble wrap I spent a long time making like a broken rag.

"Ahhh—!!"

"What the hell—!?"

I screamed when I saw Megumin popping the entire bubble wrap in one go with a yell.

She exhaled with satisfaction, smoothed out the ball of bubble wrap and returned it to me.

"... This does help one to calm down. I feel a little better."

Megumin left briskly as I knelt onto the ground weakly.

T-the thing I spent so much time making was...!

Aqua who ignored our interaction sang:

"That's the way the money goes. Pop, goes the weasel—"

<TL: Supposed to be Japanese nursery rhymes.>

"Shut up!"

Even my outburst felt annoying.

... Damn it!

Why did I vent this out on Aqua, why was I so irritable!

Part 2

— Six days left before Darkness' wedding ceremony.

“Excuse me, is there a Satou Kazuma-sama here?”

I was shutting myself in when a middle aged butler visited.

“Who is it? ... Wait, I've met you before.”

That's right, I recall that he was a butler serving in House Dustiness.

“It's been a while, I am the head butler of House Dustiness, Hagen. I have something to discuss with Kazuma-sama today...”

Looking for me?

Could it be, Darkness finally got off her high horse and was seeking help from me?

Contrary to my faint expectation, the butler named Hagen lowered his head.

“Actually, we have been receiving mails like this every day.”

He said as he handed a letter to me.

I opened it and browse through it...

“I am very sorry! I will teach that dumb broad a lesson!”

“No, it's fine. It's just that it would be bad if such letters are sent to the house of the landlord, that's why I am here before it escalates that far.”

I crumpled the letter and bowed my head deeply at Hagen.

After seeing off Hagen who left after performing his task, I looked at the crumpled letter again.

“A notice to the Dustiness House. According to reliable sources, a boss of the Demon King's Army might perform a terrorist attack on the Church of Eris in Axel. The day of

the attack is the day of the ceremony. If you do not stop the wedding, the Church will be blown away by explosion magic. Please take this warning seriously... From a certain earnest mage."

"Megumin! I have something to tell you, open the door!"

With the threatening letter in hand, I roared at Megumin's room.

— Four days before the wedding.

"Alright, next! A Rookie Killer bigger than the bag itself will come out of it!"

"Are you trying to die by releasing that thing!? What the hell are you doing, get over here!"

Right in front of Darkness' house, I grabbed Aqua who was doing a strange performance in front of a huge crowd.

"Hey, what are you doing Kazuma, let go! I even submitted a request to capture a Rookie Killer just for this okay? That aside, look at all these people!! All of them are here to watch my performance."

"That's why they asked me to come here, don't cause trouble by doing this in front of other people's homes, stop it! Why are you even doing this!?"

Aqua was cheered on by a massive turnout, and donations came flying from everywhere.

"Ah, please don't tip me money, I am not a busker, I don't take donations... Kazuma, this is a plan to lure Darkness out of the mansion."

Aqua rejected the donations honestly as she whispered into my ear.

This girl, could it be...

"You are performing here in order to attract Darkness' attention?"

"That's it! Think about it, don't you know about the story of the sun goddess' cave? A certain goddess threw a tantrum and became a hikkikomori, but she was lured by the singing and dancing of a party, tricked, and dragged out."

“I heard about that before, but do all the gods in this world like parties? Not all goddesses are like you.”

Aqua ignored my retort and faced towards Darkness’ house.

“I noticed that the curtain in that room is shaking from just now. It must be the curious Darkness who is peeking. Hey~! Darkness, can you hear me!? Come on out~! Quick, you will regret it if you don’t come and see! You can get to see my secret technique now! ... Ah, hey Kazuma, what are you doing, unhand me!”

“Like I said, they came to me to complain, so stop performing in front of their house! Alright, time to go!”

“Don’t wanna! If Darkness doesn’t come out, I will perform here every day!! Go away if you are here to hinder me! Go on, shoo!!”

By the time I dragged the unnaturally stubborn Aqua home, the sun had already set.

— Two days before the wedding.

“I’m home...”

“Welcome back. Don’t do anything stupid again.”

Megumin who just came home stood listlessly at the door.

Disregarding my advice, she sent a threatening letter to the landlord’s home in the end, and was detained until today.

“Thanks to the people from Darkness’ House, I was given an exceptional release...”

“You wanted to help Darkness, but were saved by her instead. I know how you feel, but don’t be reckless now. Both you and Aqua are doing nothing but trouble alright?”

I nagged at Megumin while developing new merchandise today too.

By the way, Aqua ran off to Darkness’ home today as well.

Recently, stalls had sprung up around Darkness’ home, turning into a tiny attraction.

"As expected, Aqua and I couldn't achieve much. Kazuma, it's about time you helped us interfere with the wedding, right?"

Megumin wobbled to the couch and collapsed onto it, saying these kind of things again tiredly.

"... I'll go if Darkness asks for my help."

When she heard that, Megumin jumped up.

"You inhumane bastard! Although you are known as Scumzuma and Trashzuma in town, I still thought that you are someone who wouldn't leave your friends in a ditch, and would help when it is time to do so!"

She started her verbal attack on me as I meddled with my new product.

"Hey, can you tell me the names of the ones calling me by those names? It is about time I settle things with them."

Megumin sunk into the couch once again.

"At a time like this, the person I like would say 'it can't be helped' in an irritated tone, and would come up with a plan. That's the kind of man he is. He shouldn't be someone who keeps throwing tantrums."

"D-don't think I'll help you just by hinting that you like me okay? I won't be fooled so easily."

To conceal my surprise at the sudden confession, I pointed at the product I was making to soothe her.

"Don't be so mad, give this a try. This thing here is a punching bag, used to vent one's stress. It's made with real leather alright? The only material that could be used is real leather though."

To calm Megumin down, I pointed to the standing punching bag filled with sand and covered with real leather.

Megumin was intrigued when she heard the word vent.

“How do you use this?”

“Simple. Just attack it. Punching or kicking will work. Ahh, let me be clear, spells are prohibited. I think you should know this common sense.”

After finishing my work, I joked as I walked towards the kitchen to make some tea and rest...

“Take this ahhh!”

“!?”

When I heard Megumin’s warcry, I had an ominous feeling and looked back.

“Hee... I feel a little bit battled. Excuse me, please make another one.”

“Why did you use a knife!! Didn’t I tell you to punch or kick it!”

With my utility knife in her hand, Megumin stood at the side with a satisfied look. As for the punching bag, it turned into trash now.

Part 3

— I kept developing new merchandise nonstop, as if I was protesting the days without Darkness.

And the day was finally here.

Today was Darkness' wedding day.

In the end, she didn't come to us for help.

"Let's go Kazuma! We will destroy the ceremony! ... Hehehe, a spell accidentally flies over and blow up the church, or a spell accidentally making the landlord's mansion explode, such things are quite common."

"Hey, don't do that. Not just debts, you really will become a criminal."

In order to discuss things with Vanir, I was busy arranging the products I made on the table of the living room.

My time spent crafting all sorts of item was also coming to an end.

I couldn't think of any more ideas.

All sorts of design plans and efficient production methods.

I didn't really understand the details of farming, but I wrote down the basic knowledge I knew as a Japanese without hesitation.

Darkness' wedding ceremony seemed to be scheduled for this afternoon, but I had no intention of attending.

Since she didn't ask for aid, it wasn't appropriate for me to barge in.

I was acting out of spite meaninglessly.

I knew that, but...

Megumin looked at me with a vexed expression, gripping her staff tightly as she said:

“The person I like, isn’t someone who would keep wallowing in depression! Kazuma! Are you fine with Darkness marrying the landlord!? Are you fine with the landlord doing whatever he wants with Darkness!?”

“It! Is! Not! Fine!”

I yell at Megumin in response.

Megumin was shocked by my outburst and backed away, stopping her movement.

“It is not fine, I don’t like that guy getting Darkness either! He’s ugly and has a bad reputation! You should know that! That old man got his hands on cute girls and good women through unscrupulous means, then chased them away with a token breakup fee after he had enough! Worst of all, despite his insidious behaviour, the decisive evidence is always missing for some reason!”

Megumin lowered her head quietly when she heard what I said.

“Sorry. So you investigated the person Darkness is going to wed...”

I tried finding out about him, and that landlord was worse than I imagined.

Even an amateur like me found out all sorts of things.

Taking bribes and extorting others.

However, the key factor was the lack of evidence.

The women who were victimized refused to talk about it, and the lack of proof meant the kingdom couldn’t do anything about that old man.

I heard that Darkness’ dad was posted here to monitor the landlord in order to dig up decisive evidence.

Megumin held her staff tightly.

“That means we can’t just ignore this right? Kazuma, can’t you think of any underhanded plan? Like you did for the hapless party before, think of something?”

... Underhanded plan huh, just in what light does she sees me.

“But I couldn’t do anything this time. First of all, Darkness didn’t tell me how much she owed, so I have no idea at all. Next, even if I raised the money, I can’t convince Darkness. That stubborn girl won’t be willing to accept the money. And finally...”

Megumin was confused.

“Finally?”

“This is a wedding ceremony between nobles. The security is tight, so we can’t go near it... Or rather, that is the reason why I have been waiting for Darkness to ask for my help. As for Darkness’ house, they strengthened their security after I broke in last time, so I can’t get in again.”

I wasn’t bothered by this until now, but I can feel the difference in status right now.

I didn’t want the dumbfounded Megumin to continue staring at my expression, and averted my face.

My back was probably giving off the sorrow of a man who had been robbed of someone he likes.

“Darkness’ father fell sick, so we will be rejected even if we seek an audience with him... I don’t have any ties with nobles that would allow me to enter the venue where the ceremony would take place... I’m just a commoner after all.”

I thought about using the relationship I fostered in the capital, but even if I ask Iris, she wouldn’t be able to do anything if both parties were willing to marry.

Our statuses were different after all.

Also, it was a miracle that we could adventure together with Darkness for so long despite coming from completely different worlds.

After I made these excuses...

“I understand. I know that Kazuma investigated the groom and did what you can. That is enough for me.”

Megumin sneaked a peek at my listless expression and showed a relieved smile for some reason.

"I will think about it seriously and take a path I won't regret. Kazuma, please think it through carefully too, and take a path you won't regret..."

Megumin probably ate something weird and was acting strange. She used a sincere voice unlike her usual self, and was like a real wise Mage in her tone.

I was speechless as Megumin went out briskly.

... Should I stop her?

No, I couldn't do that anymore.

After seeing Megumin off, I stood alone in the vast mansion.

It was rare for Aqua to have guests.

Right now, she was talking to the guest in her room on the second floor.

It seemed that she received a sudden job request, but I wasn't in the mood to help Aqua today.

Everyone who didn't have much to do would gather in the living room and spend our time lazily.

Staying here alone really made this house seem so big and lonely.

... It couldn't be helped.

Adventuring together with a noble lady was something I would never imagine when I was still in Japan.

Life wouldn't be so smooth, that's how reality was right now.

I sat down on the couch and sighed deeply.

The door suddenly opened with a bang, destroying this melancholic mood.

The one who appeared was—

"Thank thee for thy patronage! Forget about the unreliable goddess, the devil who can see through everything is here to help thou. Weep tears of joy for moi visit, and cheer as much as thee wish. Come, let moi see the various knowledge possessed by thou!"

Part 4

“Hey, bring the beautiful shop owner over here! Change, change! Why must I discuss business with you when I am feeling down!? I want the beautiful shop owner! Wiz! Give me Wiz!”

I sat down opposite Vanir in the living room while I was saying that.

“Right now, she is busy tending the shop while crying, saying that she ‘wants to sleep longer’. Unexpectedly this had the effect of ‘the owner who is crying as she works is so cute’ and ‘She will cry tears of joy if the merchandise sells well! Buy buy buy!', which made moi extremely happy. Also, it is impossible for that debt creation machine to negotiate business with others. Yesterday, moi was feeling charitable and gave her a short break, but I only took moi eyes off her for a moment and she brought in these pendants, saying that she wants to sell them to adventurer couples.”

“What kind of pendants?”

“These are pendants that will explode by burning the last shred of the person’s life who is on the verge of dying. The underlying principle is ‘sacrificing your life to protect the ones you most cherish at the final moment...’ Isn’t that romantic, she kept going ‘hyaa’, ‘hyaa’ excitedly. However, this thing is too powerful, not just the enemy, even the person you are protecting will be blown away. It really makes moi doubt the owner’s business sense. Thou want one?”

“... I-I will pass... That aside, what do you mean about helping me?”

Vanir didn’t answer my question.

“Leave that aside for now. Bring out the goods first. Moi will use my eyes to see through the appropriate price... However, moi have already prepared the money that will satisfy thee.”

He said while tapping his small black bag.

The devil who could see through everything was really efficient.

“That might be so, but I might still haggle with you. This is the compilation of all the knowledge I have. It should be obvious that I have no intention of selling it cheap.”

If I couldn't save Darkness, there was no meaning in selling them.

Vanir said in a tone as if he had seen through everything.

"The man who wants to rescue the armour girl very much but is afraid of being rejected. The devil Vanir who can see through everything announce this here. Thou will relinquish all thy intellectual property rights in exchange for what is inside this bag."

... The devil who can see through everything is really troublesome.

Vanir stuff all the design plans, prototypes and intellectual property rights certificate I handed to him into his huge bag without even checking them.

There was no need to do so for him.

By the way, I didn't say I would sell them yet...

... Because he is a devil who can see through everything?

"Hey Vanir, you know everything right?"

I pretended to be chatting casually as I asked Vanir who was stuffing the documents into his bag.

Vanir didn't even look at me as he kept stuffing his bag and said:

"Hmm. Not everything, but moi can see through most of it. For example, moi knows what thou art going to ask next. Why did the armour girl you care so much about owed a huge debt to the landlord. Is there any way to save her. Why isn't there any evidence despite all the landlord's wrongdoings."

I gulped.

"... Hey, even though you are a devil..."

"Even though moi art a devil, why art moi aiding you without anything to gain? Is moi plotting something... Of course there is. Moi art a devil after all. For example, in order to buy the valuable intellectual property thou art keeping on hand for emergencies at a bargain,"

Vanir not moving his hands and smiled at me.

Tch, this bastard.

"You can't do anything if I don't sell it. Instead of that, if you know something that I want, then just tell me."

"Alright alright. Well then, moi will reveal the truth to thee! For example, what type and colour the shop owner is wearing today! Hahaha, just kidding... Hmm? The delicious negative emotions didn't flow out."

"Please tell me about that later."

"O-Okay... Well then, I will tell thou the things thee really want to know. The armour girl is in debt because..."

"Sacred Exorcism!"

Aqua's voice suddenly cut Vanir off.

At the same time, Vanir was surrounded by a pillar of light.

After the light disappeared, only Vanir's mask was left spinning on the ground with clanking sound.

"Hey Vanir! You're an arch devil right!? It is fine, you won't die because of an attack from the goddess of toilets right!? Wake up!"

"What!? I take my eyes off you for just a moment and Kazuma gets brainwashed by a devil!? Hey, why are you helping the devil!? And I am the goddess of water!"

She probably saw Vanir when she was walking down the stairs and threw her spell at him.

Aqua kept her pose after casting her spell while she was shouting all that.

This bitch always does unnecessary things during crucial moments!

A familiar middle aged man was behind Aqua.

He was House Dustiness' butler who came to complain every day recently.

I didn't know what kind of job request he had for Aqua, but he was surprised by the situation before him.

Right before my eyes, Vanir's body started growing from beneath the mask.

... How convenient for him to have a set of clothes on him whenever he resurrests... No, his clothes were destroyed by Aqua in the first place because they were a part of his body.

"Hahaha, thou actually use sneak attacks just like a devil, delinquent goddess! Look, moi cool mask is cracked!"

"No~ isn't comparing devils to pests okay~!? Will you give pests a heads up before exterminating them, and say 'I am going to kill you, so I'm very sorry'? Isn't that dumb? Don't make me laugh."

The two glared at each other and a dangerous atmosphere arose. I stopped the two of them in a panic.

"Hey you two, pick another day to fight. Aqua, I want to hear what Vanir has to say, don't get in the way!"

After hearing what I said, Aqua reluctantly backed off.

Hagen who was behind Aqua could sense the dangerous air in the room.

"E-Erm... I don't know what the fuss is about... Arch priest-sama, the ceremony will begin at noon, we will be in your care. Well then, I will excuse myself..."

He then crouched and walked briskly between Aqua and Vanir, walking out of the door in a rush.

I was curious about why he was here, but Vanir's matter was more important right now.

The corner of Vanir's lips rose as if he was boasting his victory to Aqua.

"Hahaha, useless goddess who wasn't of any help for the incident this time, bite vexingly at thy handkerchief as thee watch the grace and utility of moi!"

This devil was unexpectedly childish, and even stuck his tongue out to Aqua to taunt her.

Aqua's brow slowly rose up. We couldn't talk like this, so please hold back.

She cradled her precious egg and sat on the couch, between me and Vanir.

She was probably intending to listen in too. Sitting with her arms around her knees, she glared at Vanir from so close their nose was almost touching.

"It is hard to talk like this... The sad man who can't even depend on her even though a goddess is by his side. Thou want to know why the armour girl is in debt? It all began with the subjugation of the Mobile Fortress Destroyer."

Vanir said in a casual tone as if he was just chatting.

.....

What did he just say?

"Hey, explain it clearly."

Vanir laughed when he heard what I said.

He didn't tally and continued:

"There isn't much details to speak of. Like other cities in the past, the landlord will lose their territory after the Destroyer rampaged through it. The citizens will lose their homes and the nobles will bear the responsibility, everyone will be uprooted from their lives. This might be a relatively better ending for the wandering adventurers. However, this city wasn't ravaged."

... Wasn't that a good thing?

Vanir probably saw through what I was thinking and laughed once again.

“The town is saved. The people whose livelihood is in the town was spared. It’s the same for the citizens too... And the Destroyer was defeated at the city gates. At the same time, the flood control facilities, granaries and all sorts of structures were destroyed.”

... I knew that did happen.

However, wasn’t the damage already minimized?

“Because the granaries are destroyed, the crop workers lost their jobs and fortune. It wasn’t easy to rebuild the granaries. And so, these people sought help from the landlord.”

... I already have a bad feeling about this and frowned.

“That’s right, it is just as thou think! That landlord said to the people seeking his help: ‘Just making out with your life is already a blessing, don’t ask for more. If you want to complain, tell that to the adventurers who failed to protect the granaries. Look, the adventurers received a huge amount of reward and have money to spare. Why not make them compensate with their bounty?’”

... The evil landlord was making my face pale.

“Yes. Except for the irresponsible landlord, no one is to blame. The adventurers already performed above expectation. There wasn’t any doubt with that. However, the refugees lost their homes, and their feelings were understandable. Even if thou tell them ‘this is just like a natural disaster, so give up’, that won’t change their view.

Vanir had a smile that befits that of a devil.

— He then casually said something I couldn’t ignore.

“The people who were rejected by the landlord went crying towards someone. That’s right, they went to seek House Dustiness, who has close ties with all of thee. They said ‘The merciful Dustiness-sama who shouldered the cost of the flood damages for a mere adventurer. Please take pity on us too’... That’s how it is.”

“What did you say? What happened to the buildings damaged by the flood?”

When he heard my question, Vanir smiled just like a devil.

"The serious damage done to the buildings is not something just a few hundred million can settle. When the guild staff asked thee to compensate for the building damages, didn't they already told you? 'Not compensate all of it, but at least some of it.'

That girl.

"Aside from the mansion, most of the wealth of House Dustiness was used to pay for the damages. After losing most of their assets, the armour girl from House Dustiness lowered her head to the landlord to take out a loan in order to help the people who are suffering because of the Destroyer."

What is that girl thinking, doing all that on her own?

"The landlord who was reluctant to lend his money added the following condition, 'if something happens to the head of the House Dustiness which makes it hard to return the loan, then use your body as collateral.'"

The sound of my hand banging the table cut Vanir off.

I then offered my hand to Aqua who was surprised by my action.

"... Hey Kazuma, banging the table in a fit of rage hurts right? It hurts right?"

Everything lined up.

The rude butler who visited our house was probably sent by the landlord.

He knew about the ailing health of Darkness' father, and came to pressure them for payment.

And in order to get the money, she mentioned something as stupid as subjugating the Hydra.

However, when she saw the adventurers who were worried and gathered for her, she thought that she shouldn't give them anymore trouble and became less fixated on all sort of things—

I asked Vanir quietly.

"How much is Darkness' debt?"

Vanir probably saw through this as well, and took out a bag he had prepared.

"Thy entire fortune together with the contents of this bag, will be enough to pay off the debt... Well then, let's talk business!"

This thing was really a devil!

Part 5

“You are really...! You are really beautiful, young lady...! After the ceremony, we must let old master who is recuperating in bed to see your glamourous appearance!”

The new maid was full of praise after seeing me in my wedding gown.

When I heard that, I couldn’t help smiling wryly.

The new maid didn’t know about the reason and inside story behind the marriage.

If my father sees me like this after the wedding with the landlord, he would be devastated.

I was doing this just for my self satisfaction.

... I could hear curses coming from the corridor.

“Why are you stopping me from seeing the bride!? Hey, get out of my way! I can’t wait any longer! Lalatina will be mine in a few hours, it’s just a matter of time! Scram! ... Lalatina! Lalatina!!”

... Fufu, it seemed that man no longer want to hide his true nature.

“No. This is the waiting room of House Dustiness. Since the ceremony has yet to begin, only those from House Dustiness can pass through this place. Please turn back.”

After hearing the voice of the agitated landlord, a servant of my house replied calmly.

“You fool! Listen well, I will be your master after the ceremony ends. If you understand that, then think carefully whether you should stop me!”

Even after hearing such an unreasonable request, the servant remained calm:

“You shall not pass. You are not the boss of me now.”

“... I will remember you. After the ceremony ends, and I have my way with your precious young lady, you will get it from me.”

After saying that, the landlord left with heavy foot steps.

"... Please ask that person outside the door to come here, I want to thank him."

The maid nodded to acknowledge my request and summoned that man in.

"Young lady, you are really, beautiful..."

With a sigh, the man smiled with his wrinkled face.

He was one of the tenured guards working in my House.

He was really inflexible, when I wanted to leave the house to play, he wouldn't let me go.

I would be found out immediately even if I scaled the fence.

For a period of time, I was really obsessed with sneaking past the guard to get out of the house.

I would throw a ball out of the fence from the garden, cajole him to get it back for me, and ran out when that man went for the ball.

He would catch up to me after I left and bring me back immediately. But that was interesting for me, so I threw the ball out everyday.

I amused myself by tricking the man to pick up the ball and sneaking out.

Thinking back, I understood that after my mother died, I lost my playmate and got this man to play with me instead.

"I am sorry... It's fine to let him in alright? I don't mind anymore. I will talk to him, so he won't punish you."

"I plan to resign after the young lady marries, so don't worry. After all, the only one I will serve is the Dustiness House. But if it is a man the young lady acknowledges, I will be willing to serve him."

The man started getting embarrassed after saying that, and I smiled wryly.

Speaking of the man that I acknowledge, the figure of the one who raided my room at night, scurried around and said a threatening line before falling out of the window painfully appeared in my mind.

I couldn't help but smile when I recall that incident.

"Young lady, the smile you show occasionally is beautiful. I feel blessed to see that expression at the very end."

The man had a satisfied smile, and turned around.

"... E-Erm, this might not be my business, but the young lady is really beautiful and elegant after all... Please don't go too far when you play by yourself..."

"!?"

After saying that awkwardly, he left.

The two maids averted their eyes from me.

I really want to teach that man who mimicked my voice and created such a nonsensical rumour a lesson!

He was a rude man who was foul mouthed, ignorant of etiquette, knew a bunch of weird knowledge, but didn't understand things that were common sense.

Timid and reserved, but will act recklessly sometimes, an unfathomable man.

His job is the weakest, and aside from his luck, his stats were below average. Using his myriad of skills and cunning as his weapon, he was a mysterious man who fought on par with bosses of the Demon King Army, bounty targets and all sorts of monster.

When I revealed that I was a member of nobility, instead of my noble heritage, he was a strange man who was more interested in my name.

Also...

I almost crossed the line with this weird guy, so I must be a weird woman too.

I thought back of my happy adventuring days.

Normally, a noble like me wouldn't be able to live my life freely, including the choosing of my marriage partner.

Despite that, I had been able to spend my time together with close friends so far.

... It was enough. It would be greedy to wish for more as a noble.

It is time for me to pay back to the people in this town.

I won't let that landlord do as he please anymore.

I will find out his secret while that landlord obsesses over my body.

No matter how long it would take, I will be able to go on if I have the memories of our times together with me.

... But, this felt strange.

In the past, I thought marrying this landlord wasn't so bad, but I couldn't feel any charm from him now.

Was it because of that person?

Thinking back to my constant banter with him, the corners of my mouth rose in a smile.

"E-Erm... Young lady?"

Seeing me smile suddenly, the maid helping me with makeup was troubled and stopped.

"Oh, sorry, it's nothing."

I pressed the maid to continue with the makeup, and thought of my comrades with contrasting personalities.

If they found out the reason I was in debt, what would they think?

Megumin will probably get angry.

Aqua would probably cry for some reason.

If it was that man, he would probably scold me ‘why are you doing such a dumb thing!’ and see through the real reason why I was avoiding them and take swift action.

And then uncover the landlord’s secret, putting an end to all this.

Will this group of cheerful people still accept me as a companion?

“Young lady, how beautiful...! Please come before the mirror...!”

I followed the instruction of the maid and smiled wryly as I looked at myself in a wedding dress.

Regrettably, the one who will see me like this would be that landlord.

However, although normal people won’t be able to attend the ceremony, they will be able to see me after the ceremony was over.

Will he come?

... No, he definitely wouldn’t.

He was probably still fuming alone in the mansion.

I couldn’t help smiling awkwardly just thinking about his unhappy face.

“It is time. Let us be off, young lady. The priest who will be gifting this wonderful day with her blessing is the best in this town. This will definitely be a joyous wedding...”

The butler Hagen who was the longest tenured servant in our House knelt on one knee and offered me his hand.

I was filled with gratitude for the people in this town who granted me with my freedom so far.

Ahh, those happy times...

The year I spent with everyone was filled with joy every day.

I smiled,

And took Hagen's hand—

Part 6

This was the most holy place in Axel.

The church of Eris... The attendees were influential people in town or nobles who came from neighbouring countries.

Everyone knew that the wedding was a sham.

The seated audience was chatting as they please, without any tension despite the ceremony which was going to begin momentarily.

The underlings of the landlord guarded the entrance of the church, and the crowd who wanted to catch a glimpse of the bride gathered en masse.

Most of them were adventurers.

Darkness kept her noble peerage a secret when she became an adventurer.

News of her becoming the landlord's bride was spread everywhere, and they probably gathered here to see Darkness who usually wore her armour in a wedding gown.

What a bunch of curious people.

They probably became adventurers because of their strong sense of curiosity.

The rowdy church finally quieted down.

Waiting rooms for the bride and the groom was situated on either side of the church's entrance respectively.

Hagen accompanied the bride's pure white figure from the bridal room.

As her father was feeling unwell, the butler took over his duties.

Darkness who was walking with her head lowered and covered by a veil was so stunningly beautiful that no one could take their eyes off her.

Shortly after, the landlord who was wearing a white tuxedo also came out from the groom's room.

His large round body puffed his tuxedo up like a balloon. Like the other attendees, he couldn't tear his eyes away from Darkness either.

With his mouth half opened and eyes on Darkness, he waddled forward... And only came to his senses when Darkness' butler cleared his throat dryly.

The attendees didn't even look at the unsightly figure of the landlord, and only focused on Darkness.

A moment later, the church's organ started playing solemn music. The landlord and Darkness walked on the same wedding aisle, but his eyes didn't look forward, resting on the bride beside him instead.

Darkness who walked on the same aisle kept her head lowered.

Seeing Darkness like that, I felt extremely flustered.

She even said 'He will probably ravage me for days and nights without anything to eat or drink, how exhilarating.'

Where did your usual perverted expression go?

What happened to your face that would redden when you took on monsters?

What about your words that could even turn off the bosses of the Demon King?

It was a wedding, but I couldn't see any happiness on her face, Darkness seemed so lonely with her head lowered.

It was finally time to take the wedding vows. Under the watchful eyes of the attendees, they came before the altar.

Before me.

That's right, before me, who was standing beside the altar.

In this world, as long as you have a profession holy in nature, you can solemnize weddings even if you are not a pastor.

For example, the lone rare existence in the beginner town— an archpriest will do.

For this event, the priest hired by the butler Hagen to gift her blessing for this wedding was the one with the highest ranked holy job— Aqua-sama.

And as her assistant, I stood beside her in plain sight.

Even after reaching the altar where he will take his vows, the landlord was still focusing on the bride, while Darkness kept her head down.

The solemn music stopped, and a voice that was not solemn at all sounded out:

“Do you, Darkness take this old man who is so fat that he is sweating oil, to be your wedded husband, in defiance of my wish as a goddess? Do you promise to love this old man, comfort this old man, honor and keep this old man in sickness and in health, safekeeping your virginity from this old man as long as you both shall live? You can’t do it right? Well then, I want to go home together with Darkness and eat the dishes made by Kazuma and drink all I want...”

A speech that was out of place was heard.

Everyone was surprised and their eyes fell onto Aqua.



The landlord turned his head to Aqua with a start.

“....! What? Y-You are the woman who gave me a ton of trouble in my house! What are you doing!? Just what are you doing here!?”

The curses of the landlord rang out and Darkness looked at Aqua and me in shock, her mouth gaping open and shut.

Using this chance, I grabbed Darkness' arm tightly.

Dear father and mother.

The cute son you wanted to raise to be a righteous man.

Had thrown his peaceful life away, and challenged the people with the most authority in this world by kidnapping a daughter of nobility.

When Darkness snapped out of her shock, her face slowly turned green as her tears flowed freely.

“W-What have you all done... Aqua... K-Kazuma! K-Kazuma, let go of me! Just what are you two planning to do? This is no joking matter! Barging into the wedding ceremony between nobles will end in nothing short of execution! What foolish thing have you done! So stupid!”

I cut off Darkness who was crying emotionally and telling me off:

“Shut up you idiot! You are the one who is stubbornly doing stupid things, don't decide to cover my debts for me on your own! Do you think you're my wife!? If you like me, just tell me straight—I already told you that!”

“When did you ever say that!? What are you talking about you buffoon!”

After listening to the inopportune bickering between Darkness and me, the stunned landlord finally came to his senses.

“T-Take this man! Arrest him and the phony priest! He... He is just a commoner, and he dares disrupt the wedding of nobles! Hurry, hurry up and seize him!”

The landlord yelled, and tried to take Darkness back from me.

I blocked the landlord who pounced over, and hid the crying Darkness behind my back forcefully.

The landlord's face turned purple immediately...!

"Damn you! This has nothing to do with you, get lost! You might like Lalatina, but—! She owes me an enormous debt that you won't be able to pay in your entire lifetime! If you like this woman so much, then prepare the money to buy that woman first, plebeian! If you can do that!"

When I heard the landlord's provocative words, I picked up the bag beside the altar.

"I heard you loud and clear, make good on your promise, old man! Take this, the debt Darkness owed you, two billion Eris! Two thousand pieces of Magic Silver Eris coin worth a million Eris each! I wiped away the debt, so I will be taking the girl! Also, I don't like her that way! S-She is just an important comrade!"

I corrected the landlord's words, and dumped the content of the bag onto the feet of the landlord!

As for why I dumped it onto the floor...

"Ahhh!? What, two billion!? Ahh, wait, my Lalatina! Give Lalatina back... Ahhhh money! Pick them up! Hey, pick them up for me!"

The landlord started picking up the money frantically.

At this moment, the attendees around the area started picking up the coins.

There might be people who will pocket the money, but I didn't care that much.

Using this chance, I pulled Darkness' hand as she stood still amidst the chaos, and people who appeared to be the underlings of the landlord ran towards me.

Darkness then shook my hand off and protested.

"W-Why you! Who asked you to do that!? You are making a mockery of my resolve! And this money! Where did it come from!?"

I answered Darkness who was still so stubborn during such a moment agitatedly:

"I sold them. I sold all the ideas I could think of. Together with my savings from doing quests, it comes to two billion Eris exactly. I have no choice but to earn an honest living from now on... It can't be helped, I sold them all. I can't buy them back even if I want to. If you understand, then let's go!"

Seeing me like this, Darkness had a complicated expression of worry, joy, crying and laughing, and said:

"To go so far, you... you are really...! I-I....!"

The underlings of the landlord ran up to us, I was at the limit of my patience, so I grabbed Darkness by the shoulders and shook her!

"Stop wasting time and get it together, you don't have the right to reject this anymore! Stop arguing! I already bought you from that old man land lord! You are mine now! Listen well, I will be working you like a horse! Steel yourself to pay back my hard earned money with your body, you perverted crusader!! Understand!? Answer me if you get it!!"

"Y-Yiss..."

Being shook around, lectured in public and being called a pervert made Darkness' eyes water and her face ecstatic in a bad way. She answered in a weird voice.

As I held onto Darkness' shoulders, her legs gave way and she collapsed onto the ground.

My words seemed to have scored a critical hit on this masochist.

Why is this girl always getting in the way during critical moments!?

I forcefully picked up Darkness in a princess carry and charged towards the entrance of the church.

カズマ

力、カズマつ、放せ！手を放せ！

うつせー大バカ女が!! お前俺の女房気取りか!
俺の事が好きならそう言えっていつてんだろ!

この大バカがつ!
誰がそんな事を言つた!

The attendees were all powerful and influential nobles.

They were either bad at dealing with ruffians or didn't want to be dragged into troublesome matters. Aside from those picking up the money besides the landlord, no one else tried to stop us and just watched idly.

"Hah... Hah... I-I am sold... A noble like me, sold to this man! To think, that, that I have to pay back with my body...! Ahhh, what is with this situation...! Abducted from the scene in a princess carry...! This is... This is..."

Darkness who was in my arms blushed in a way I have never seen before, and her breathing was so heavy that it seemed dangerous.

"Hey, hey you, your drool! Your drool is coming out! Are you really okay?!"

Seeing me warn Darkness, Aqua who was following behind showed an enlightened expression.

"As expected of the mean spirited Kazuma-san! You are just paying back the debt that was shouldered for you, but you twist it into you buying Darkness! Hey Kazuma, if Megumin hears what you said about getting Darkness to pay back with her body, you will eat an explosion right? If your body is gone, I can't revive you, so watch yourself okay?"

"No, that's not it! Don't make it sound so bad, I was just going with the flow! I will just make her pay back in her role as a crusader and an adventurer!"

As I was replying agitatedly, the underlings of the landlord blocked our way as we ran along the red carpet.

I said to Darkness who had a dazed expression in my arms:

"Damn it! Hey Darkness, how long are you going to stay like this! It is time for you to run by yourself! And you have a lot of muscles that are heavy!!"

"Why, why you! Why did you say that I am heavy and spoil the mood in such a rare moment!!"

With tears coming out from the corners of her eyes, in a daring move, Darkness tore the lower half of her skirt off to facilitate easy movement, and jumped out of my arms.

"We already went this far, there is no other way and I am fine with it! Get out of my way, dogs of the landlord! I will kill anyone in my path!!"

She then took off and tossed her veil aside before charging the minions of the landlord with her long hair flowing behind her.

The minions grabbed onto Darkness who was uttering dangerous words in an attempt to restrain her, but Darkness didn't even dodge and reached out her hand.

Several of them grabbed her shoulders and arms, but she ignored their resistance and dragged them with her, and held onto the face of two minions with each hand and tightened her grip.

After having a taste of her iron claw, their head made creaking sound as they screamed.

"Hey, we came here to save you, so what the hell are you doing charging to the front!? Aqua, please buff me! Buff!"

"Leave it to me! You want the super entertainer spell?"

"Of course! That's super useful!"

Behind us were the landlord and some of the attendees who were doing their best to pick up the money.

After becoming a versatile talent with Aqua's support spell, I ran behind Darkness and shouted with my mouth covered:

"Hey, don't bother with them and let them off for now! You all help me pick up the money too!!"

Mimicking the landlord's voice, I ordered the minions that were wrestling with Darkness.

"Ah? Ohh! Yes Sir!!"

They thought that was the instruction from the landlord and ran past us towards him.

"Morons! Why are you all here!! Go and capture Lalatina!"

“!?”

The minions who let us off momentarily chased us again in confusion.

In no time, the number of underlings before was more than a dozen.

Without any weapons, we might not be able to break through even if we had the buffs from Aqua.

Seemed like it was time to show the serious mode I used in the capital...!

As I was about to go all out after getting Darkness back.

“Light of Saber!”

A familiar voice erupted from the front door of the church, cutting through the brick wall beside the door, and light shone through the gap.

That was a magic Crimson Magic Clansmen like to use to cut through anything by concentrating mana onto their chopping hand.

A moment later, the wall of the church collapsed along with the door.

Two figures stood there with their back to the glaring sun.



Many adventurers here to see the wedding surrounded them from a distance, watching intriguingly.

The underlings were on guard, pulling a distance away from the two of them out of fear.

“Megumin, I did it! Because we are bosom friends! I-If it is my bosom friend’s request, I have no problem with doing something that seemed to be a crime! After all, I was told ‘please help me, my bosom friend!', so I can’t refuse!”

“Yes yes yes, thank you for your hard work, Yunyun. As expected of my bosom friend. Well then, you can go back to the inn now.”

“Eeh!?”

Two girls with crimson eyes stood there.

Megumin took a step forward, and the underlings of the landlord back away with a cramped face.

Their eyes were on Megumin’s staff which was glowing at the tip.

... What the hell.

She seemed determined to finish her explosion spell in the middle of town.

Megumin raised the staff that was filled with a fearsome amount of concentrated mana, a never seen before seriousness on her face. Her eyes glowed red as she flicked her cloak fiercely.

She then said with a calm and adamant voice:

“The evil mage is here. Following her instincts, the evil mage is here to kidnap the bride.”

With her back to the sun at the entrance of the dim church, Megumin was as cool as a hero, making me who came to get Darkness earlier much less prominent.

... That’s what I actually wanted to do!

Part 7

As for the attendees and the landlord's underlings.

They fell into a state of panic and watched every move of this evil mage.

"Do you know what they call me? If so, you must know what the magic at the tip of this staff is right? Let me make this clear, controlling this spell requires a lot of concentration... If you sneak up on me and I lose control, it will go boom! Think about it if you want to rush at me."

Simply said, she meant that she will lose control easily, and they were free to go for it if they were fine with the consequences.

What a perfect threat of an evil mage.

The underlings surrounded Megumin from afar with a cramped expression.

The one who wanted to grab Darkness who was charging in front and the ones who were fooled by us and was chasing from behind, were all reluctant to capture us after seeing this.

Yunyun who was standing beside Megumin surveyed the church.

"... Hmm? Megumin, Kazuma-san has already... look..."

Megumin looked at me, Aqua and Darkness with her torn wedding dress as prompted by Yunyun. She understood what happened and smiled with her eyes narrowed.

She then pointed the staff at us to open a path for us to escape.

When she did that, the underlings before us scampered away into the audience seats.

Using this chance, the three of us ran to Megumin...!

"W-What! What are you all afraid of, you bunch of imbeciles! She must be making an empty trap! That idiot definitely knows the consequences of releasing explosion magic here! She won't cast her spell, so get them!"

The landlord who was still busy picking up the coins yelled.

But when she heard that,

“Ho! You think I will be scared! You dare say I will be too scared to cast explosion, are you for real!? Very well then! I accept this challenge!”

“Stop! We won’t go near! We won’t so please stop!”

“We won’t attack so don’t do it!”

“Alderp-sama! Please don’t provoke her!”

The landlord’s underlings all pulled away with a stiff face when they heard what Megumin said.

Megumin’s notoriety reached such an extent.

After all, Megumin won’t cast explosion in the middle of town..... She won’t... Right?

Thanks to Megumin intimidating the underlings, we managed to link up.

“I wanted to show off my cool side and you two stole the best part from me! But I am grateful that you came. Thanks!”

Megumin smiled when I finished.

“Elegantly taking the most delicious part is the instinct of the Demon Magic Clan. Really Kazuma, I knew you will do something even though you said you won’t... To think you came before I did.”

Megumin said with a satisfied expression for some reason.

“Megumin! Even Yunyun went so far...! After we go back... I have something to say to all of you. After we go back...! I will say my thanks...!”

Darkness was either really emotional, or had yet to cool down from the excitement earlier. She couldn’t even talk properly, and Megumin replied a little shyly.

"Don't mention it, well... We are comrades... H-How can I let such an excellent crusader go!"

Megumin probably felt embarrassed about saying the word comrade, and tried to cover it out by squeezing out the last few words vaguely.

When she saw Megumin acting like this.

"Comrades... How nice to have comrades, Megumin! Erm, as a bosom friend, will you also rescue me if I fall into the same situation?"

"No, Yunyun is just a bosom friend, and even proclaim to be my rival... Not a comrade, so no..."

"!?"

Megumin emphasized the term bosom friend and rejected Yunyun mercilessly.

"Really, now is not the time for a casual chat! Give us a plan!"

The underlings were gradually surrounding us as we stood at the entrance of the church.

Megumin was the most dangerous one right now, and might go ballistic at any moment.

I don't think they would charge forth in such a situation... The landlord was probably feeling frustrated because his underlings didn't charge at us and shouted:

"Hey, that group watching over there. Don't look around, I'm talking you bunch of adventurers! Over there are a bunch of criminals! Get my bride back from them! I will give you a grand reward in return! Or I can hire you to be my guards! You will then be free from the tedious job of adventuring! Please! My Lalatina! Bring my Lalatina back!"

The onlookers looked at each other after listening to what the landlord said.

And then...

"...? Hey, didn't you hear me!? I will pay you!? How much do you want!?"

Not only did the adventurers not move, they even faced the sun and stretched their back lazily all of a sudden, pretending they didn't hear anything.

Seemed like they want to let us off.

My deepest gratitude, just not joining in was a big help!

"Hey Darkness. Just like the other time you challenged the Hydra alone, lots of people are helping you this round too. It's time you reflect on your stubborn temper, alright?"

Darkness' face blushed happily as she nodded with tears in her eyes.

Things were going smoothly so far...

I understood what those adventurers were thinking, so I didn't say anything to spoil the mood for Darkness right now.

Everyone was smiling...

And when Darkness return to the guild, in the near future — 'Young lady, Lalatina, aren't you going to wear your beautiful wedding dress?'— she would be teased like that.

All the adventurers in this town knew that Darkness was a noble lady now.

I don't think the crude adventurers in this town will become afraid of Darkness who they had known for so long.

I might be dragged in too, so I will not avoid Darkness who would definitely be teased by them.

... Shortly after, while we were surrounded by the underlings, the people in the church started congregating towards us.

It was a stalemate.

The opponents weren't stupid, they were not goons that would stand around and wait to be defeated.

They outnumber us heavily, and wouldn't let us escape easily.

If we used weapons in town, our criminal actions would be set in stone.

No, our crimes were already beyond debate.

“... Ugh! Kazuma, I am at my limit in controlling my spell! Can I fire it off? We are already criminals anyway! I can’t wait any longer, can I shoot it at those guys?”

Everyone was shocked when Megumin said this all of a sudden.

Including me.

“Ugggghhhh, I can’t do it anymore, it’s gonna blow! Run, get away from me!”

She lost control at this crucial moment!?

If it was any other mage who said that, it would probably be a bluff.

However, everyone here knows Megumin very well, and scattered with their faces turned green.

I hid immediately too...!

“Explosion!”

Megumin casted the spell skywards.

With a terrifying boom, a streak of light arc through the sky, followed by a grand explosion.

The shockwave shattered the glasses within the town and everyone throw themselves onto the ground with their hands on their head.

“Quick, use this... chance...”

Megumin who depleted her mana looked at me as Aqua supported her, but her voice suddenly faded away... In the end, she stared at me dumbstruck.

Under the bask of her cold eyes, I realized the situation I was in.

I was curled up in a ball behind Darkness...

“Hey Kazuma, to think that you can do something as shameless as hiding behind the person you are rescuing.”

“... Yeah, Kazuma seemed really cool today, I was just wondering if there is something wrong with my eyes. I’m glad it was just my imagination.”

“K-Kazuma-san... You are the worst...”

The last words by Yunyun dealt a fatal blow to me.

The onlookers who were lying prone on the ground were looking at me as if I was trash.

Leaving that aside, the opponents were terrified by Megumin’s explosion, so this was our chance.

We were planning to break out of their encirclement, but...!

“The explosion magic can only be used once per day! Now is the chance, get them!”

The terror caused by the impact of the explosion spell only lasted for an instant, and the underlings of the landlord charge at us without hesitation now.

Megumin who was on Aqua’s back shouted!

“Yunyun! I will leave this place to you, we will make a move first! No matter what happens to me, you must not turn back and fight on!”

Yunyun heard what she said...!

“Idiot! We are already bosom friends!? What are you talking about, how can I ditch Megumin and... What did you just say!? Didn’t something like this happened in the Home of the Crimson Magic too!?”

Yunyun asked in return.

“Please stall for time, my bosom friend! I will introduce my friends to you next time!”

“I understand, leave this to me! We are bosom friends after all, it can’t be helped!”

Seeing the cheerful Yunyun blocking their way, the underlings all showed a guarded expression.

A-Ara, if you don't mind, I can be your friend any time...!

After we left Yunyun behind and ran off,

"She is just a girl mage from the Crimson Magic Clan! Get her before she completes her spell!"

When I heard the underlings said that, I felt a chill on my back.

It couldn't be helped, I will stay behind and stall for time so Darkness could escape...!

Just when I was thinking about that and turned back.

"That hurts ahhh! Why did you push me suddenly! Ahhh, my bones! My bones ahhh! Dust, save me!"

A man fell onto the ground with a scream.

"Hey Keith, are you okay!? How terrible... it's a comminuted fracture!"

I heard a familiar voice and name.

"What!? I just bumped into you, don't try to pull a fast one! He was the one who dashed out all of a sudden and fell by himself! Hey, why are you grabbing my legs even though you have a fracture! Unhand me!"

The underling retorted.

"Hey hey! Are you trying to run after paralysing him from the waist down? I don't care if your boss is the landlord or whatever, that is too unreasonable!"

While we were running, I could hear the voices of the delinquents behind me.

The underling who was harassed by the mean spirited delinquents said lazily— "You just said it was a comminuted fracture, and now he is paralyzed? What the hell, don't bother me, scram! I will let you have it if you get in my way...!"

The underling then shoved the delinquent aside.

"That hurts! I am an upstanding citizen, and he used violence on me! He hit me! Alright, the brawl is on! Let's go! I was abused by a certain noble recently too! I already hated nobles, I will vent it out on you then!"

"Hey!? Wait, don't!?"

"The fight is on!"

"Fight, fight!"

"Hey, I'm joining in too!"

"That landlord pissed me off since a long time ago!"

"Wait! D-Didn't you have a fracture!? You said you have a fracture! Wahhh!"

I sneaked a peek behind me as I ran.

The onlooking adventurers were ganging up on the underlings of the landlord and beating them down.

I will treat them to a drink once things dies down.

"Lalatina! Don't go, Lalatina! Lalatina!"

The heartbroken cries for Darkness came from far behind us.

Part 8

“— Y-Young lady!? Your dress...! H-Hurry, come in!”

After escaping from the underlings, we ran to Darkness' house.

A guard opened the door for us in a hurry.

Abandoning the wedding ceremony suddenly and coming back, Darkness who was in a tattered wedding gown ignored the shocked people in the mansion and walked straight in.

The three of us didn't know where she was going and followed behind.

“Dear father, pardon my intrusion.”

Darkness went towards one of the rooms.

By dear father she meant...

Oh, when I broke in earlier, I broke the windows in her father's room when I escaped.

So her dad had to change rooms.

Darkness entered without waiting for an answer.

Was it fine for a noble lady to do that...?

No.

Her father was in no condition to answer the door.

He was frailer than that time I broke in, with dark circles under his eyes. He was breathing deeply in his sleep.

Her dad opened his eyes slightly.

Darkness and us walked up to her dad's bedside.

Seeing Darkness, this father...

“... Ohh, Lalatina... How beautiful... Just like your mother...”

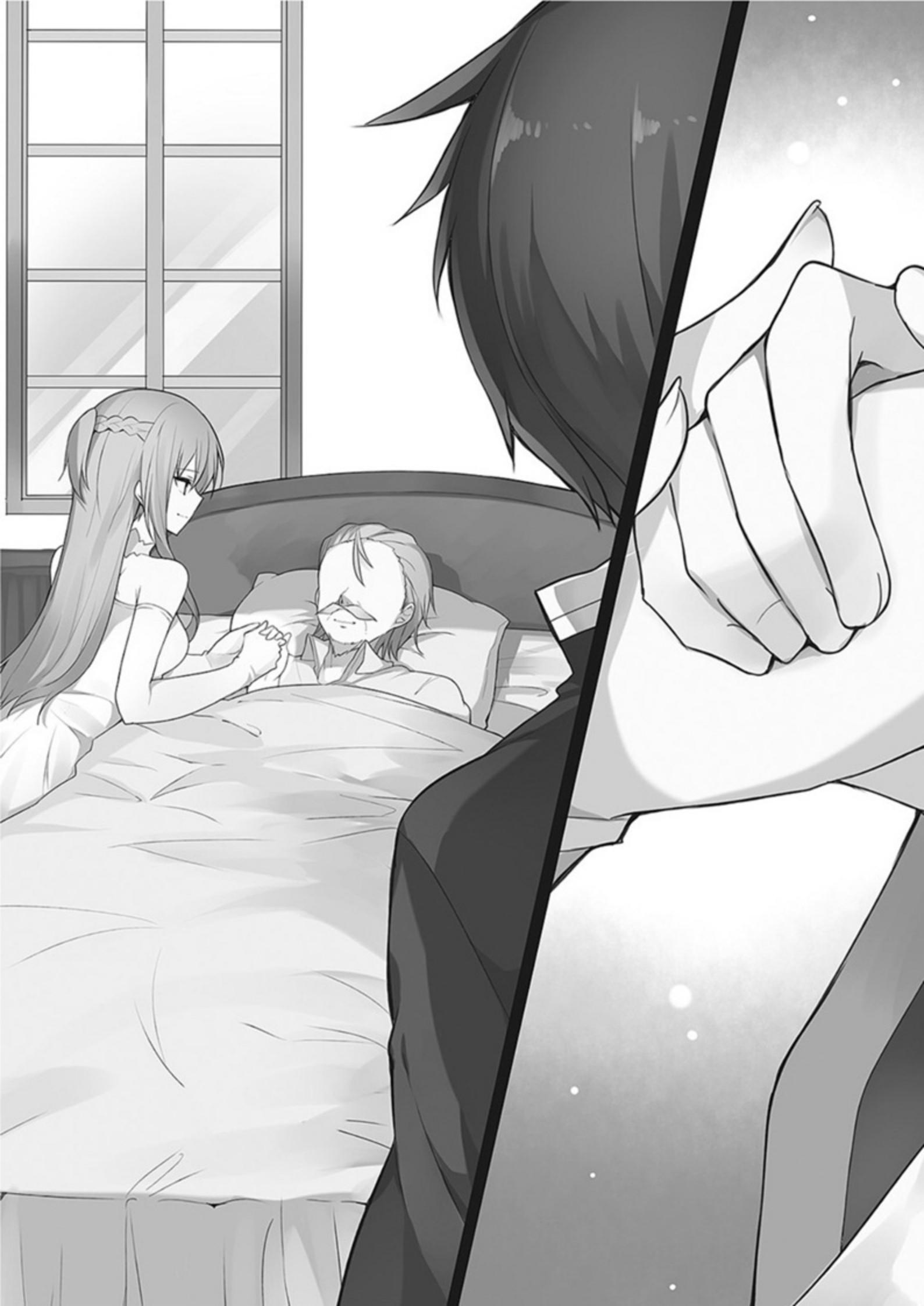
He said with a kind but weak smile.

Darkness lowered her head apologetically before her father.

“.... Erm, I am very sorry, dear father... I decided on the wedding on my own... But I destroyed it in the worst way possible and ran away...”

When he heard that, her father closed his eyes very happily.

“Is that so...! That is good. Don’t worry about it, there is nothing to apologize for.”



After saying that, the father turned towards me.

“Kazuma-kun, can you come over here please.”

In response to him, I approached the bed.

“... I will get some fresh air outside.”

Megumin who read the mood left for the corridor.

... While the one who can't read the mood approached the bed of the father and gawked around.

There was a patient here so I couldn't lecture her, and I let her be.

“...You did great this time. Thank you, my deepest gratitude.”

Even if you thank me so suddenly...

“I merely cleared the debt I owed your daughter.”

When he heard me, this father laughed once more.

He then said something incredible before Darkness.

“Kazuma-kun, I will leave my daughter to you. Please.”

“Eh!?”

Darkness was surprised by his sudden words.

“No need, is this a punishment game?”

“Eeh!!?”

Darkness screamed even louder when she heard me.

She looked straight in my eyes, and seemed to have something to say.

The father smiled cheerfully when he saw me like this.

... It couldn't be helped.

Seemed like the treasure sword of the kingdom saw through my mind.

I get it, I will take care of her, and won't let weird guys harass her.

The father probably saw through what I was thinking and sighed in relief.

"Lalatina. Are you living happily now? So happy that you don't mind throwing everything else away?"

He said softly with his eyes closed.

Darkness answered immediately without hesitation.

"I am. I want to give up everything to protect my comrades."

When her father heard this, he nodded with satisfaction and answered 'Is that so' softly.

"Lalatina. Choose the path you wish to take. Leave everything else to me. Even with my body like this, I can still do something at the very end."

When she saw how her father acting like this, Darkness went near him and held his hands.

"My beloved father, thank you for raising me...! When your health gets better, next time, please chat with me until I fall asleep, and tell me about my late mother..."

"I love you, my cute daughter. Yes, next time, I will tell you about how I met your mother..."

Darkness' eyes were moist.

Her father muttered 'next time' again with a happy smile, and held onto Darkness' hand...

He was suddenly covered by a magical light.

"Sacred Break Spell!"

That girl who couldn't read the mood casted a spell.

"Ahhh!?"

"D-Dear father!?"

The sudden light made Darkness and her father scream.

When the light dissipated, her father's eye circles were gone. He was still thin, but colour returned to his skin.

... Eh.

With everyone watching her, Aqua said cockily:

"It is a curse! This must be a curse from a powerful devil, but I undid it easily!"

The father regained his vigour thanks to this goddess who couldn't read the mood. He and Darkness looked at each other while holding hands.



“.....” x2

Darkness released his hands slowly as her face turned beet red. She whistled and looked out the window, while her father pulled his blanket up to cover his awkward expression.

I could catch a glimpse of his face– which was as red as Darkness'.

... They were father and daughter after all.

“But it's fine now! That's great, Darkness! You can chat with your father about your late mother as many times as you want!”

Aqua's cheerful voice bore no malice.

Darkness covered her face and squatted down.

I guess all's well that ends well...

INTERLUDE

THE DEVILS SNEER IN THE LATE HOURS OF THE NIGHT

“Ahh... Damn it! Damn it! Damn it ahhh!”

In the hidden cellar beneath my bed room.

I vented all my rage on the sloppily dressed devil.

Kicking the broken devil Max that couldn’t even fulfill a single wish again and again.

“Yee— Yee— Yee— ”

The devil made strange noises when he was kicked, and squatted with his head in his arms.

How long had it been since I summoned this low level devil with the divine relic?

Normally, I will find it easier to get along after spending so much time together with someone. However, I still couldn’t get use to him.

“It’s all because of you! If you are a more reliable devil! My Lalatina won’t be snatched away right there! Is your power to manipulate events so limited!? Trash! Trash! You trash!”

“Yee— Yee— Yee— My devil powers would be weakened in a church. More important of all, someone seemed to have broken the curse, Alderp.”

Max maintained his position of squatting and hugging his head and said something unexpected nonchalantly.

“The curse is broken!? Why you! Can’t you even curse a mere human to death!?”

I roared as I kicked hard at Max.

This fellow with a terrible memory even forgot that he didn't receive any price in return. I only used him for so long because I didn't need to offer him anything... Was it time to throw him away?

However, I still need his powers to wipe the slate of what happened clean.

After all, what I said to Lalatina before the influential nobles and people in town was inappropriate.

In the heat of the moment, I used foul language on Lalatina whose peerage was far higher than mine.

But that was fine too, I could execute that damn brat who barged into the ceremony openly now.

Lalatina might offer herself in order to save him.

"Max! By tomorrow morning, change the memories of everyone who attended the ceremony, as well as those who heard what I said to my advantage, and settle everything! Understand!?"

I thought about what to do tomorrow as I said this and left the dim cellar...

"Yee— Yee— ...Can't do it, Alderp, I am not that powerful."

His words made me stop.

... Can't do it?

This broken devil had never went against my words.

No matter what I wanted, or how I wish to twist the facts, he had never said that it was impossible.

This was the first time he said that.

"... Can't do it? I am aware of the fact that you are a low class devil. After all, you were summoned by that divine relic randomly... However, you don't have the right to reject me. Do it! I don't know what you can or cannot do, just get it done! Is there too many people? Isn't memory manipulation your strongest suit!? Do it now!"

Despite that...

“Can’t do it. There is a light... Yee— The strong light that dismissed the spell is in my way, I really can’t do it.”

When I hear the devil’s negative response, my wrath got to my head.

“Enough you useless devil! I will undo the contract with you and summon a more powerful devil! This is my last order! Bring Lalatina to me...! Use your power to manipulate events and bring Lalatina over right now! Then I will then pay all the outstanding price!”

Max reacted to this.

“Price? You want to pay the price?”

“It’s true. I’m serious. You are too stupid, that’s why you forgot that I have paid the price multiple times already. I will pay it properly this time. Go, Bring Lalatina to me.”

I faked a friendly tone and said to the devil without the ability to retain memories. I already conned him plenty of times.

... At this moment.

“Is the lord of the territory here? It’s me. I am here to apologize for what happened today, can you grant me an audience...?”

Someone knocked on the door to the cellar. No one should know about the existence of this room.

Why at this hour, why she know about this cellar, all these didn’t matter!

I would never mistake this voice...!

“Lalatina! Is that Lalatina!? Alright, great job Max! Splendid! You did amazingly! I don’t know how you did it, but I will fulfill my promise and pay the price! The contract is undone! You are free! Oh, Lalatina, I am opening the door now!”

“I didn’t do anything, yee, yee! You want to pay the price? Undo the contract?”

I ignored Max who was mumbling about something and opened the cellar's door.

The one who was looking down at me was without a doubt Lalatina.

And she was wearing a seductive negligee, with a warm smile she normally wouldn't show. She descended down the cellar's stairs slowly.

Her attire and smile conjured the darkest desires within me.

Lalatina said sweet and softly with an apologetic face:

"I am very sorry my lord... I will apologize for what happened earlier in the day... Please allow me to offer my body in exchange for the lives of my comrades...!"

I understood everything when I heard that.

Just as I expected, this woman was here to plead for mercy for her companions!

I couldn't hold it in anymore!

The woman I had been after all these years was dressed like that before me.

I couldn't wait for Lalatina to walk all the way down and was about to pounce on her...

Lalatina's mouth opened in laughter as her figure distorted like a mirage.

Standing there was...

"Hahahaha! You think it is Lalatina? Too bad, it is moi! Oh, what an intense negative emotion! How delicious, delicious! Hahahaha!"

A masked man was standing there, dressed in a tuxedo similar to Max.

"!W-Who are you? Who the hell are you!? This chilly feeling. Just like Max! Devil! You must be a devil!"

I pointed at the man before me who was probably a devil, and he sneered.

"Max! Kill this despicable devil right now!"

I screamed as I pointed at the masked devil.

To take the form of Lalatina I dreamed so much about, and feast on my feeling of disappointment and loss, how evil!

Ah, this disappointment as if I had fallen into a chasm!

I will never, never forgive him!

“...? Why must I kill my kin? Yee...? Hmm? Have I met you before?”

Max ignored my order and asked.

How many times had he defied me today?

What was with this devil, is he broken?

While I was thinking about that, the masked devil before me displayed perfect etiquette that would make a noble like me jealous, and bowed towards Max,

“This is the hundredth or thousandth times moi have introduced myself to thee. It’s the same this time— How do you do, Maxwell. Maxwell, manipulator of facts. Maxwell, twister of truth. Moi art the devil that can see through everything, Vanir. Devil that twists the truth, Maxwell, moi have come to receive thee!”

The broken devil wasn’t called Max, but Maxwell?

No, he said to receive him...?

“Vanir! Vanir! Why, why is your name so nostalgic!? Have we met before?”

“Hahahaha, thou always say that every time we meet! Thou art Maxwell! Thou came from another world without your memories, thou art moi kin! Let us be off, to the place thou ought to be, back to hell!

“W-Wait, hold up! He is my servant! Don’t decide on your own and take him away!”

I blurted out on reflex, but the devil named Vanir merely laughed.

"Servant? Thou art think Maxwell who art one of the dukes of hell like moi a servant of someone like you? Arrogant shorty who's only strong point is your luck. Luck is really the only thing thou have going for thee. It just so happens the first devil you summoned is Maxwell, how fortunate."

If thou summoned any other devil, the moment the summoning succeeds, thou would be torn to shreds if thee didn't pay the price! However, your luck is really good! The ignorant Maxwell! Powerful, but as simple as a child! It is thanks to him that thou reach your current position, thou should repay him properly!"

I don't know what he was talking about.

That Max I have been raising was a duke of hell?

No, I climbed to my current status by my own power.

That broken devil only contributed insignificantly.

I was confused by what Vanir pointed out, and the masked devil added on with a sneer.

"Also, before moi appeared, you said this to Maxwell... 'I will fulfill my promise and pay the price! The contract is undone! You are free!'"

I realized I messed up.

I thought Max used his powers to bring Lalatina to this place.

In a moment of excitement, I said all that.

... So this was the devil that claimed he could see through everything.

He knew this would happen and chose this moment to come here.

And he seemed to have seen through what I was thinking at the very moment.

"Yes, the contract between thou and Maxwell is the problem. Ara, thou really made moi went round in circles."

... Round in circles?

“S-S-So you... you, could it be!?”

“Yes, just as you imagined! Moi created the opportunity for that brat to pay off the debt, and told him about thee! Hahahaha! This, this is great, magnificent negative emotions! Delicious, how delicious!”

I clenched my trembling fists.

“You dare! You dare do such a thing...! If you just wanted this broken devil, just tell me straight! If you reveal your identity, I would have given him to you from the start! You won’t need to involve the entire city, and make me lose face before everyone...!”

That’s right, if I knew there was a devil that could see through so much, I won’t do something so daring...!

The devil faced me,

And said something ridiculous nonchalantly.

“How interesting! Hahaha, a good show, what a good show! Even that goddess is dancing on the palm of moi hand this time! When that delinquent devil participated in the ceremony, she had to ask for moi assistance to incubate the egg. She let me taste the negative emotions of absolute shame! Tormented by thy lust, thy love finally blossomed! But the moment thou achieve thy goal, the bride was snatched away! Thy negative emotions in that moment! It was so delicious that moi would have no regrets if moi was to be vanquished at that moment!”

What is he saying, what is this devil saying!?

“Well then, Sir Landlord. Moi have no further business with thee. Moi will take Maxwell back to hell, and moi will continue to work harder under that crazy shop owner.”

Seem that this devil was planning to leave with Max.

It couldn’t be helped, I didn’t know Max was such a powerful devil, but there will be a way even if he leaves.

However, what should I do tomorrow?

I won't be able to wipe away the evidence of my wrongdoing from now on.

As I was troubled over this.

"Yee! Yee! Vanir! Vanir! Before I go back, I have to let Alderp pay the price! He said he wants to pay the price!"

The excited Max made a whistling sound like a flute and said happily.

Shit, I think I did say that.

"I get it I get it, the price huh. I will pay so hurry up..."

And go back. Before I could finish.

A dull crack reverberated in the dim cellar.

I realized it was the sound of my arms snapping...

"... Huh, ah, ahhhhhhh!?"

Was after I saw Max holding my broken arms.

"Yee!? Yee— ! It hurts, it hurts ahhh!?

I screamed as my broken arms remained tightly in his grip.

"Alder! Alder!! Your screams are great, Alder! Yee—Yee— !

The broken devil was still saying nonsense.

"What are you doing!? Release me Max! Stop! It hurts, stop!"

When he heard my cries, the devil that I had been with so long showed an expression for the first time.

The face that was as expressionless as its mask twisted, turning into a smile from the bottom of his heart.

Vanir then said:

"Hahaha! Maxwell, thou can continue with this in hell. This man owes thee a huge price. Just bring this man back to hell and let him pay back slowly."

Even though my senses turned vague because of the pain, I heard something that couldn't be taken lightly.

"The price thou need to pay for the service of Maxwell will be in accordance with the time stipulated in the contract, during which thou shall continuously release the negative emotions Maxwell likes... Yes, thou worked Maxwell really hard and led a really depraved life... Thou probably couldn't clear the debt before the end of your lifespan."

The masked devil's words sent a chill down my back.

Even the pain in my arm was thrown to the back of my mind as I tried my best to bargain with the devil.

"I, I got it! It was wrong of me to work you so hard! How about this, first, my massive—"

"Thy wealth huh. When Maxwell returns to hell, all thy wrongdoings will be exposed, and all thy assets will be confiscated and managed by House Dustiness... After that, it would be returned to that guy who was regretting in his home, complaining that 'I shouldn't have cockily thrown all my money away, I should mercilessly make that woman pay me back with her body', as well as the town and kingdom. Vanir the devil that can see through everything declares that thou art penniless."

When I heard that, my teeth chattered and I almost fainted.

All the money I accumulated...!

"In...."

"In that case, 'pick as many people as you like in this mansion in place of me', right? Unfortunately, the obligation of payment must be done by the contractee! ...Oh, this is a negative emotion that is hard to come by, but despair is not to moi taste. That's what Maxwell prefers though."

After hearing that, I finally stopped the quivering of my body.

“M-M-Max... Max...! I-I did many cruel things to you... Cruel things. But, please, can you save me? Spare me Max, I don’t really hate you...! It’s true! Please, Max!”

Vanir merely snickered as he listened to me, and didn’t correct my lies for some reason.

Max released his hold onto my arms.

I collapsed onto the ground.

With a glimmer of hope because of his action, I looked up at Max uneasily.

He was smiling happily.

An innocent and pure smile.

This devil that had always been expressionless showed a smile as pure as a child.

“Alderper! Alderp! Me too! I like you too, Alderp!”

Vanir continued to snicker as he watched me, and I didn’t know what was wrong.

The broken devil I have known for such a long time continued shouting excitedly with a flushed face.

“Alderper! Alderp! I like you Alderp! Stay by my side in hell, Alderp! I want to enjoy your despair forever, Alderp!”

Oh, I see now.

So the reason why I couldn’t bring myself to like this devil was this.

I was terrified from the bottom of my heart, terrified of the hidden nature of this devil.

With the smiling devil before me, I couldn’t stand the fear anymore.

— Oh, my god.

“Oh, the feelings are mutual, Alderp. Maxwell is the type who likes to go above and beyond, he will definitely toy with you all day and night! Hahaha! Hahahaha!”

God, please let this broken devil lose his interest in me and grant me a quick death...
With the laughter of the devil in my ears, I prayed to god for the first time in my life.

"I will cherish you Alderp! Unlike the girls you abandoned after abducting them, I will take care not to break you! Yee—Yee—Yee—Yee—!!"

EPILOGUE 1

WELCOME BACK!

The next morning after we snatched Darkness away.

“The landlord is missing?”

When Darkness who came over to my mansion to report this, I thought I misheard that.

Why did that old man who kept crying Lalatina, Lalatina, disappeared?

“Yes, the servants couldn’t find him anywhere.”

I was baffled by what Darkness said.

I thought the landlord would lay siege on our mansion with his private army first thing in the morning, and made preparations.

“For some reason, plenty of evidence indicting the landlord’s wrongdoings turned up. The one who gave Princess Iris the body swapping divine relic was him too. Some say the landlord couldn’t hide his evil deeds anymore and fled in the night.”

— I see.

“... And so, there is no need to flee anymore, put down your bags.”

I heeded the judgement of Darkness and took my backpack off.

Megumin and Aqua behind me put their luggage down too.

I was planning to find a faraway land to spend time as a farmer before the dust settles.

“Forget it, this is great too... What’s the matter Darkness, come in.”

I rushed Darkness who was standing at the entrance and refusing to move... But she remained stubborn with an expressionless face.

“What is it, Darkness? Something happened?”

Megumin asked and Aqua shouted “Ah!”

“That’s right, Megumin wasn’t in the church from the start, so you don’t know! Listen! Darkness was bought by Kazuma! Kazuma shouldered Darkness’ debt and even said ‘You are mine now! Pay back my hard earned money with your body’...! Darkness was scared of what Kazuma might do and doesn’t dare to come in right?”

“... Hah?”

“Hey, let’s talk a little. Wrong, a lot of the details are wrong. No, your content is correct, but the fine details are off, the way you put it is terrible!”

With a red glow in her eyes, Megumin looked at me as if I was trash. Darkness shook her head.

“... No, that is not the issue. Kazuma did ask me to pay back with my body and called me a perverted crusader though...”

Ahh, Megumin has started chanting her spell.

Darkness suddenly lowered her head in a bow.

“Sorry. I troubled everyone because of my willfulness... Even I feel that I did something stupid. I hope everyone can forgive me...”

Aqua and Megumin rushed to Darkness’ side when they saw her like this.

“Let bygones be bygones, you are back safely after all. I don’t mind. Kazuma might have lost plenty of things, but this man has the habit of not wanting to work if he has money. This is just fine.”

“That’s right, or rather, if this didn’t happen, I won’t be able to visit Darkness’ house. If I didn’t, I wouldn’t have noticed that your father had been cursed! ... That’s right, we need to find the criminal who cursed him! I suspect it was done by that masked devil. My clear eyes can’t be mistaken! Let’s teach him a lesson!”

Darkness stared right at me as the other two consoled her.

“I really owed Kazuma a huge favour this time. You abandoned everything and turned it into cash... It won’t be immediate, but the money Kazuma paid on my behalf will be returned by the kingdom in the future. When my father recovers, we will calculate the amount from the impounded property of the landlord. However...”

Darkness’ face turned gloomy.

“... However, the intellectual property you sold won’t come back. You mentioned that you were planning to live peacefully as a businessman, but now...”

It’s about that huh.

“Forget about that. I learned cooking too, setting up a small shop and making dishes from my country will earn me some pocket change... Huh, wait, the money will be returned to me?”

It sunk in suddenly and I asked with a serious face.

“Yes, it will be returned. The entire two billion used. The compensation for the landlord’s mansion and the cost of the damaged building will be reimbursed to you. After all, these are all money that arose in the process of protecting this town. It should have been borne by the landlord managing this land in the first place... But now that I think of it, why did I accept the proposal of the landlord and paid up... As if I was hit by hypnosis. Also, why are evidence of his wrongdoings popping up all over the place...?”

Darkness pointed out the illogical parts in confusion, but that wasn’t important.

It’s not important at all!

“Two... You say two billion...!?”

So I don’t need to work anymore for my entire life...!

... Hmm, wait. There are twenty four hours in a day, and that service is five thousand Eris for three hours.

With two billion, I could spend my entire life in a dream world that I desire...?

When I was thinking about that, Megumin and Aqua closed in on me.

“Kazuma today feels really... something— really handsome! Neh, Kazuma-san, I want an extravagant pet house for Emperor Zell!”

“That’s right he is really handsome, I always thought Kazuma is a handsome guy. By the way, I want a magic item that enhances magical powers.”

“Ara, you bunch of sluts who smelled green dough!... Darkness, what is it?”

Darkness remained unmoved at the entrance as she watched our interaction.

“Really, just let it go. You worked hard to cover for us all this while right? Although going that far by yourself yesterday was really maddening. But I am a little glad too. So let’s call it even. And the entire sum will be returned too. Let’s write off what happened yesterday, isn’t that good enough?”

To be honest, the money I will be getting back was so large, I didn’t really care about these trivial matters.

And I have been holed up in the house recently, so I want to book that service immediately, then find the most expensive hotel room in town and stay there for a week.

But Darkness became gloomy when she heard the term ‘write off’.

“Which means... what you said about buying me is void too?”

Darkness just finished saying that when Megumin and Aqua closed in on me and stared at my face from a close distance.

... S-Spare me.

“Of course it is void! That’s it, forget about everything that happened yesterday!”

Darkness became more depressed when she heard that.

... Hmm?

Could this be the roundabout way of Darkness’ love confession, hinting at me that she wants to be my ‘property’?

Ignoring my expectation, Darkness lowered her head as if she was about to cry.

“... And, about that letter... The letter about leaving the party...”

... Oh, I see, Darkness was planning to leave the team.

Since yesterday's incident was void, the thing about her using her body to repay me would be void...

... What, my expectation was wasted. Really, such things...

“What are you talking about, Darkness is our important crusader, we will never let her go right?”

“Right, forget about that now. Darkness likes pretending to be retarded sometimes. Isn't the only place you can be right here with us?”

... Damn it, they said it first.

But Darkness was poking her index fingers at each other in front of her chest, looking up at me with an uneasy gaze.

She wouldn't relax unless I said it myself.

Before I could speak, Darkness already started.

“E-Erm! My only strong point is defence, I am a crusader who can't even hit the enemy with my attacks... However... However, can I... Can I join your party again...?”

I smiled wryly at Darkness who wasn't used to using formal speech.

“Of course... Welcome back.”

She answered—

“... I-I'm back!!”

With tears in her eyes, Darkness showed a relieved smile—

“... Neh, Kazuma, you still think it is a pity right? Letting Darkness pay you back with her body has some elements of lewdness right?”

Aqua who was the best at not reading the mood raised this point with a giggle.

What the hell was this girl saying.

“Speaking of which, you announced to everyone that Darkness is yours right? What is that? A confession of love? Like the time Yunyun says she want a baby, or when you got tamed by Iris easily in the capital, and now this. Why are you so easily won over? Even thought you tried to make a move on me when we were sleeping together in the Home of the Crimson Magic, you’re too frivolous. Be more serious about life.”

Megumin was displeased as she complained.

... What was she talking about?

Was this jealousy or what? You should make it clear.

Act like the girls in harem anime, and make it easier to understand.

... Darkness' expression was turning strange.

She still looked uneasily, but her eyes shifts between me and Megumin who were acting as if we were having a lover's spat.

“... B-By the way, when Kazuma broke into my house last time, I almost crossed the line with him...”

“Eeh!?”

Darkness revealed something unnecessary with an embarrassed face, making Aqua and Megumin yelp.

“H-Hey, don't.... Don't say it... That was just a failed attempt...”

Seeing my weak rebuke, Megumin and Aqua yelled again.

““Failed attempt?” x2

I dug my own grave.

"Neh, Kazuma, are you retarded? While Megumin and I were working hard to bring Darkness back, what were you thinking?"

"Kazuma, you didn't go to bring Darkness back, but went there for a night raid!? Your stock value as a man has fallen into the abyss! Just what the hell were you doing!?"

What was with that, leaving the teasing of Megumin in the Home of the Crimson Magic aside, I didn't do anything wrong this time.

Darkness became fidgety with an embarrassed face.

"Although I said night raid... But he only barge into my room late in the night, covered my mouth before I could scream and pushed me down onto the bed. Then pressed me down so I couldn't resist with my other hand... During the intense struggle, my clothes tore opened and my stomach was toyed with."

"Eh!?" x2

"Hey, wait! No, that did happen! But...!?"

"!?" x2

When she heard my protest, Megumin pulled away from me in a flash.

"I already know that Kazuma sees Darkness with lusty eyes, but to think you are actually a man who is fine with any woman. I thought Kazuma was a weakling but had an honest side. I thought you were somewhat serious at that time, but you just wanted to get laid huh. You can frolic with anyone in bed as long as it is a woman right, you trash!!"

I wish she could let me say my piece too, if this goes on, I will become the biggest trash of them all.

Before I could explain to Megumin, Aqua followed up with another attack...!

"That's right, when I was sleeping beside Kazuma in the stables in the past, this beast keeps ogling my body!"

“That’s definitely impossible.”

“Why!?”

Pushing Aqua who was on the verge of tears and attempting to strangle me with one hand. Darkness was embarrassed, but was still snickering happily.

This woman, she just wanted to get back at me because of the failed night raid and me using her voice to bring up all sorts of matters.

As Darkness crossed her arms and snickered at me, watching me struggle helplessly—

“... You were the one who enticed me, asking if I want to become adults together...”

I chastised her softly.

“!!” x2

“T-T-That’s wrong!? I was thinking that since I was marrying the landlord, I might as well...!”

“You admitted! Darkness admitted that she started it! What a twist! ...Well, I can read the mood too, so I will bring Emperor Zell’s egg to suntan in the park!”

“Darkness, you shameless slut! Acting all prim and proper like the female lead in a tragedy, but you are just flirting around, I was wrong to worry about you!”

“Wait...!? W-Wait a moment, stop!!”

Megumin poked Darkness’ cheek with the tip of her staff, and Darkness glared at me with resentment.

Seemed like she still want to go at it.



I held back Aqua who was trying to leave excitedly with an egg in her arms, and brought up something I didn't want to point out before Darkness cools down.

"... Hey Aqua, a question. How does family registrar for marriage works in this country?"

I raised a different topic suddenly.

"Why are you asking that? First, on the morning of the ceremony, the couple will submit the family registering documents to the relevant authorities. In the afternoon, they will then hold the ce... re... mony..."

Aqua seemed to realize what I was trying to say.

Megumin whose expression turned stiff noticed too.

"...? What's the problem?"

Only the unworldly noble lady couldn't keep up.

Megumin was probably trying to console her.

"I-It's common to see people who have divorced once nowadays, yup!"

Darkness finally noticed and raised her head in shock.

An aristocratic lady, a masochist, a virgin and a divorcee. Just how many traits does this girl want?

"Erm... How should this be interpreted? Darkness was abducted in the middle of the wedding. The next day, the groom had already ran away. Theoretically speaking, Darkness was abandoned by that old man."

Aqua's words that bore no ill will made Darkness tremble violently for a moment.

She then looked at me uneasily...

"Well... Family registry is just a trivial matter anyway. Don't worry about it... DeserterWifeNess."

Darkness turn and ran away bawling.

EPILOGUE 2

CHRIS AND ERIS

“— That’s what happened. Darkness then shut herself in her father’s home and refused to come out. I need to plan a one man infiltration again.”

This was an elegant cafe in the downtown area of Axel.

It was a secluded shop, and there weren’t any other customers except for us.

“You are mean as usual. Don’t bully Darkness too much okay? She might look strong, but is actually very delicate alright?”

“I know, I know. Speaking of which, what have you been doing, Chris? You sure took a long time to return from the capital.

I was recounting the commotion that transpired to Chris who has returned from the capital.

Chris scratched the scar on her cheek troublingly.

“Ara— I was busy with some other things. I was in the vicinity of Axel recently, but was called to go to some other place. I finally came back after settling my backlogs.”

She then lay on the table and stretched her back lazily.

“Called? By who? The thief guild or something?”

“Eh, well, there are all sorts of things to settle after people die right?”

“... You are part timing in a funeral house?”

Chris didn’t answer and simply sighed deeply.

“To think that the divine relic was in the landlord’s mansion... When I infiltrated the landlord’s villa the other time, I was confused by the divine relic Aqua-san was holding—”

A while ago, I searched for two divine relics in the capital together with Chris.

The last one was found in the basement of the landlord's mansion.

Chris retrieved it the moment she returned to town.

The effect of the relic was to summon a random monster and control it.

What was the landlord planning to do with it?

After listening to my explanation, Chris drank the coffee that had cooled in one go.

"Anyway, it ended well this time. Thank you for saving Darkness, Assistant-kun."

"It was my pleasure, Big Boss."

We smiled at each other.

"Sigh... I still need to retrieve the other divine relics... Hey Assistant-kun, you..."

"Just to be clear, I am a busy man."

After my pre-emptive rejection, Chris puffed her cheeks and glared at me.

"The remuneration..."

"I don't need money."

Chris scratched the scar on her cheek a little troubled.

"It can't be helped then. I will look for you for help when the time comes, okay?"

She then stood up with a gentle smile... Hmm?

Her smile just now and the way she scratch her cheeks felt a little off.

Or rather, I saw that somewhere recently...

I had been bothered by this for a while now.

Chris will call Darkness and Megumin by name, but will add a ‘-san’ when addressing Aqua.

More importantly, her name resembles that other person.

So does her hair and the colour of her eyes.

On the other hand, that person address Aqua as sempai, and add a ‘-san’ to Megumin.

But she addressed Darkness directly by name.

Maybe to her, Darkness was a close friend.

— Driven by the urge of doing mischief,

I stood up and said to Chris who was waving goodbye to me:

“By the way, Eris-sama. Where did you take the divine relic you retrieved from the landlord?”

“Oh, that one? I cast a seal onto it and dump it into the lake where the Hydra was resting eternally...”

Chris...

— No, the goddess Eris.

With a gentle smile on her face as usual, she stood before me stiffly.



BONUS STORY

MAKE A SHOW OF GRATITUDE EVERY NOW AND THEN

『Oh! It might be summer, but this attire is too sexy. Are you trying to seduce me?』

The first thing I said after returning to the mansion made Darkness who was walking around in a skimpy attire freeze.

“Hey hey, what are you saying!? Talking about the moment you come back... The weather is too hot so it can't be helped, I'm not trying to seduce you...!”

『You might be saying that, but you are actually looking forward to it a little right?』

“! What!? What's wrong with you today?

After hearing our exchange, the jaws of Megumin who was playing a board game with Aqua dropped.

“What is happening all of a sudden. Kazuma might sexually harass others frequently, but that's too straightforward today.

I took a glance at Megumin.

『Megumin is wearing a one piece today huh. Megumin has a boyish personality should go all out and just go naked.』

“What's wrong with this guy!? Saying all that nonsense out of the blue!?”

Megumin said in a panic while Aqua sat before her with her arm crossed and nodded.

『No, actually...』

“— A magic item that reveal your thoughts?” x2

『That's right. Wiz asked me to test out this new magic item. When Wiz who was dressed skimpily in the summer asked me with upturned eyes, I accepted it happily.』

That's how it was.

On my head right now was a hat handed to me by Wiz.

“E-Erm, I wasn't asking why you accepted... No, that was just your thoughts leaking out. But why did Wiz make such a magic item...?“

『It was developed with the idea of realizing conversations with monsters and animals. By the way, Wiz wanted to test it out on animals. I think she mentioned about taking it to a beef farmer she knew for testing.』

“Why didn't you stop Wiz, wouldn't that make it hard for the cow farmer to work!?”

I looked at Aqua who didn't move as she said that while sitting before the board game.

I then took off the hat and place it on Aqua's head.

『What should I do. If I move the piece here, Megumin with her twisted personality will definitely target it. What should I do? Betting a side dish on one match is a bad idea. If this goes on, I can only eat condiments with rice tonight. I should have used rock scissors paper to decide the match. Like what happened just now, I just need to cast blessing magic to settle it.』

When the voice of Aqua came out from the top of her head, Megumin pounced on Aqua straight away.

“Hey, what are you doing Megumin!? The board is a mess now! The match is void now right!? There isn't enough time for another match, so let's settle this with rock scissors paper!!“

『That surprised me, but this is a good chance! Did the weather got to her? It's great that Megumin is as impatient as Darkness!』

“So that's how you think of me!? I am an arch wizard known for being cool and collect, not like Darkness at all!!“

“Wait, I don’t think I am that impatient...! And what do the both of you think about me usually!?”

I gently remove the hat from Aqua and put it on.

『That’s how this magic item works... Oh, the big tits girl is still looking at me suspiciously. You wear it for a change then.』

“B-Big tits girl!? Is that how you call me in your mind!? S-Stop! I don’t want to wear this thing, wear it yourself if you want!”

『Tch, I was planning to ask how many times you masturbate a day after you put it on.』

“A-An aristocratic lady won’t do something as shameless as masturbation! Ah, stop! Really, I’m not lying! I’m not lying, so don’t force the hat onto me!!”

After seeing Darkness’ reaction, Megumin sighed.

“Really... I think it would be better if this magic item is not developed. Kazuma, take it off. Just tell Wiz what I said.”

“It can’t be helped. Forget it then. I was showered in cold glares by women on my way home too. I won’t dare go near the vicinity for the time being.”

“What were you thinking on your entire way here? Were there any police patrolling the area?”

I took off the hat, stretched my back lazily and walked to the kitchen.

“By the way Aqua, the rock scissors paper just now is void. To actually cast blessing spell secretly, don’t be too rampant with your cheating. Together with all the match we had prior to this, let’s have another proper match!”

“W-Why do you know!? No, you are just pulling a fast one, where is the evidence! Right, show the evidence that I actually used magic secretly!”

“Give it up, Aqua. Your dinner tonight will be rice with condiments.”

“Why—!”

While listening to the commotion in the living room, I placed the hat on top of the wine bottle on the table as I prepare to make dinner...

『Thank you for tending to my tomb and telling me adventuring stories all this while.
』

I turned and looked at the hat in surprise because of the sudden voice.

“What was that? ... My imagination? No, I heard it pretty clearly...”

At this moment, Aqua's cries came from the living room.

“Kazuma-san, Kazuma-san—!! The two of them are so mean! Neh, please make more dinner tonight!”

... They were really troublesome.

I made an extra dish—

—*Amazon Special Bonus Story*



あとがき!

祝

誕生日

やったーーー!
(♪ロく*)

笑顔のアカア様!!

2015.9

7巻発売＆アニメ化
おめでとうございます
放送が今から
待ち遠しいです！

コミカライズ版も
よろしくお願いします！
渡真に（わたりまさひと）

HEY, LISTEN UP! I HEARD THE ERIS CHURCH IS IGNORING ME, THE SEMPAI OF THEIR GODDESS, AND HOLD A GODDESS ERIS THANKSGIVING FESTIVAL! I HAVE DECIDED! I WILL LET THOSE COCKY ERIS DEVOTEES HAVE A TASTE OF THE POWER OF THE AXIS CULT!

EVERYONE WILL HELP ME, RIGHT?

!?



I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND, BUT I WAS IN THE CARE OF THE AXIS CULT IN THE PAST, SO I WILL GIVE YOU A HAND.

!!?



AS A STOUT ERIS DEVOTEE, THIS IS A BIT...

PHEW



YOU ARE TOO MUCH, DARKNESS! FORGET IT, I WILL JUST GET CHRIS TO HELP ME!

!!!??!?



NEXT VOLUME,
AXIS CULT VS
ERIS CHURCH!

ASSISTANT
-KUN!?



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世界に祝福を! 8
AXIS CULT VS ERIS CHURCH



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